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By Thomas Gaspey.

OTHER TIMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

Other Times ;

OR,

THE MONKS OF LEADENHALL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
 THE LOLLARDS ; — THE MYSTERY ;
 CALTHORPE, OR FALLEN FORTUNES ;
 &c. &c.

All thynges in this boke that ye shall rede,
 Doe as ye lyst, there shall no manne you bynde,
 Them to beleue, as surely as your crede.
 But notwithstanding certes in my mynde,
 I durst well swere, as true ye shall them fynde.
 SIR THOMAS MORE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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OTHER TIMES;

OR,

THE MONKS OF LEADENHALL.

CHAPTER I.

"Now say on, gentle frere;
Of thys tydyng
That ye me bryng
I long full sore to here."

SIR THOMAS MORE.

THOUGH Mr. Common Hunt paid the greatest attention to Edmund, not all his kindness, nor even the captivating display of the powers of his most accomplished pupils, could make the day which our hero had to pass at the Lord Mayor's dog-house other than tedious in the ex-

treme. He could derive no amusement from those proofs of canine sagacity which Dick Longthong had held to be perfectly irresistible ; and though noon was already past, he sighed for the fearful period which had yet to elapse, before the approach of night.

Mr. Common Hunt had procured a messenger to carry a letter to Lord Erpingham. After some hours were wasted, he returned, having been unable to find his way to Fickett's-fields. Sent back with more particular directions, he brought news that Lord Erpingham was from home. Having waited for his return, to no purpose, he brought with him the note which he had been charged to give into his lordship's own hands.

Edmund would have sought his noble friend himself, but feared to venture forth in his monastic dress. The clothes of Mr. Longthong were so small, that he could not wear them ; and the neighbourhood of Finsbury was not so well

provided with tailors before the middle of the sixteenth, as it is now in the nineteenth century. He was therefore constrained, however reluctantly, to remain where he was.

The evening at length arrived. The last ray of light had not quite vanished, when the impatient Edmund, having thanked Mr. Common Hunt for his civility, which he promised to acknowledge shortly in a more appropriate way, prepared to recross the fields he had traversed in the morning. The door of the dog-house was about to close, when a merry imitation of the crowing of a cock was heard. Edmund took no notice of it; but Mr. Common Hunt, with equal surprise and pleasure, exclaimed,

“Cock’s body! my master, but it’s right well that you did not leave sooner, for there is the merry note of Nick Bray himself.” And the jester, who now made his appearance, proved that the ear

of Mr. Common Hunt had not deceived him.

" I am glad," said Edmund, " to see you here in safety ; I was fearful that some discovery would take place."

" Marry, and discoveries have taken place, such as would startle that great discoverer, Giovanni Gaboto, or Cabot, as common people, no reflection on you, Mr. Common Hunt, call him. After all the pains I took with Billy de Broke, they found out that it was not you."

" This I expected."

" But as I expected, they did not find it out in time to cut off your retreat ; nor did they discover that I had any hand in beautifying him ; nor do they suspect his transmogrification to have been effected, as you know it was, by *Old Nick*."

" Then what drove you to quit the monastery so early ?"

" Simple apprehension, and favourable opportunity. O I have such tidings ! But to tell you a secret, Master Dicky

Longthong, which you will do well to impart to your cupboard without delay, I have made but a shy sort of dinner; and as fasting is not that religious ceremony, on the observance of which I most pride myself, if any decent remains of your repast can be found, I shall not be above eating with you."

"It nothing displeases me," said Mr. Common Hunt, "to find that you have neither lost your stomach nor your spirits."

"That is no bad speech; though it falls short of that which was sometimes addressed to mine organ of hearing by old Cavendish, when I was fool to my Lord Cardinal."

"What might that be?"

"Why it ran thus: 'Our Lord being meditative, and much engaged in writing, will not forth from his closet, and will nothing for refection there, save an orange; wherefore, of his singular grace and favour, he bids us to dine for him,—

and so, master fool, sit down and eat thy fill.' ”

“ The last part I will say, as lustily as he could say it, if you give me but time.”

“ Time ! — O you are unreasonable to expect an hungry man will give time : I would sooner give pence.”

“ Wait but till I have killed a capon.”

“ In sooth, not I ; for I am not disposed to take his feathers for a *warner*, and cannot wait till he is fairly stripped of them and spitted. But judging you would be thus circumstanced, I ordered at the tavern within the gate, hard by Coleman-street, (where I changed mine apparel,) half a dozen pigeons, a coney, and a goose, to be dressed while I came hither to bid you to supper.”

“ I cannot with you,” said Edmund ; “ for to me each moment seems an hour till I reach Lord Erpingham.”

“ You are impatient, I know, to pour vengeance on the villain Egbert. But

cease to be the unmanageable colt you have been, and subject yourself to the bridle of reason, that you may hearken to good counsel. You *shall* to supper with me, for I have much to tell; and for Egbert, have not a thought of him. He has been taken good care of, I promise you."

"What mean you? Tell me of what you speak? I am all impatience."

"So am I — for supper. Now, if you can repine so at waiting for a tale, what ought I to do, who am detained from a meal? When impatience to hear is opposed to impatience to feed, the two must fight it out as well as they can; but cross you the field with me, and we shall soon make peace between them, and satisfy both."

Though reluctant to postpone his visit to Lord Erpingham, Edmund was too strongly interested in what related to Egbert to reject the only terms on which he could gain the information he coveted;

and without further objection, accompanied Bray to the tavern, whither they were followed by Mr. Common Hunt.

“ Now then shall you know,” cried the jester, “ how I have proceeded ; but first take a horn of this wine, it is so good, that were I the host here, being settled and married, I would never be a day without two horns, so my wife objected not, which were most unlikely. Nay, drink ; for I speak from knowledge of the fact, when I say this is a good gallon of wine, wanting a small drop, not passing a quart, which I took just to moisten my lips wherewithal, before I sought the dog-house.”

“ Now to your narrative.”

“ The narrative shall come ; but Heaven be praised the supper comes first. Now each man take his pigeon, or his part, nothing heeding how his fellows fare ; so shall my discourse be poured forth, without further interruption than graceful mastication may from time to

time occasion, at which none shall be chafed."

"Proceed."

"Such is my purpose. Where did I leave off?"

"Before the beginning," said Edmund, with some impatience.

"That," said Bray, "will do right well for you to say, who are of gentle blood; for though he uses not good discretion who flatters youth, I pause not to say, a speech which sets forth that a man hath left off even before he has begun, would not be disliked in the mouth of a fool. This well reminds me of what my Lord of Wiltshire said one day; he was father to Queen Anne, whose head being considered but a sort of useless ornament to her person —"

"I pray thee, trifle not. Thy tongue hath not of late thus ambled; and now that I would have thee more grave, thou art like one half beside himself."

"That is true, I will admit: but expect

not me to be grave to-day, for I have had good wine and little meat; and moreover have seen so much to delight me, that though liquor hath nothing corrupted my reason, I am half drunk with joy, which to say truth, is so intoxicating in its nature, that I cannot but acknowledge the wisdom of Heaven, in allowing man to drink of it but seldom and sparingly.

“Detain me not,” cried Edmund, with increased earnestness, “from that which thou hast to impart.”

“You shall know then, that having deemed it wise to follow you, I availed myself of the opportunity afforded by the search made in all the vaults for Edmund, to pass into the house of the pepperer; and there, wishing in the street to look like an honest man, I took the liberty to steal a cloak and hat, leaving my friar’s garb behind. I had been here some hours ago, but passing on my way through Lothbury, I saw a varlet with a horse, who entertained a crowd with prodigies.”

“Heed not feats of horsemanship at this moment.”

“I speak not of such, but of traits of knowledge, such as would speak this same animal, dumb though he be, as rational as I am.”

“Let thy marvel be brief, and go on with thy tale.”

“Nay, I go on with his tale; for after he had danced most gracefully in silver shoes which he wears, asks me the scape-grace master, which was the greatest rogue in all that company?—whereupon comes my gentleman round to where I stood, and gives me a whisk in the face with his long tail that almost cut out my eyes, and thus pointed me to all the crowd, as the biggest varlet then present.”

“Truly this horse must have much knowledge,” Mr. Common Hunt remarked.

“Marry, but this was nothing to what followed. ‘Tell me,’ quoth the master,

‘ what number of pence ought to be paid for a quart of good sack wine in merry England?’ which hearing, the learned beast lifted up one of his fore feet, and struck the ground thrice with the same. ‘ Nay,’ quoth the fellow, ‘ in that thou liest; forasmuch as thou tellest me three-pence. That is the extravagant price which knavish taverners demand; but I would know what ought to be paid, so pr’ythee resolve me better.’ ”

“ And what followed upon that?” demanded *Mr. Common Hunt*, looking from the goose, which, holding a leg with one hand, (forks not being then in use,) he was about to divide with the knife which he grasped in the other. The performance of this operation was delayed for some moments by the wonders which the jester recounted of the horse, which interested his friend of the dog-house, as much as they annoyed Edmund.

“ Upon that,” resumed Bray, “ the creature taking time, as it seemed, to

have better thought on the matter, paused a pretty while, and presently gave the ground two buffets with his hoof, thereby avouching that the quart of wine should not cost more than twopence."

"This concerns not me," Edmund remarked; "and I can in no wise longer abide to listen to the rehearsing of tricks which horses may be taught."

"But what follows much imports you, or I had not detained you thus."

"Then to it straight."

"I shall; but take one cup of wine, for it shall much refresh thee, and even while you swallow it my tale shall arrive at conclusion."

"I cannot drink."

"You govern your subjects, such I deem your eyes, ears, nose, and other portions of your person, most partially. Is it not shame to starve your melancholy mouth, by reason of your overweening eagerness to appease the hunger of your ears?"

“ I will away, if you thus trifle.”

“ I would not trifle if time pressed ; but have I not told thee that Egbert is secured for this night, and that nothing remains for thee, but to laugh with me at his discomfiture ?”

“ Again you wander ; so, farewell.”

“ Tarry,” cried the jester, rising to detain the restless Edmund, “ and I will be brief in very truth ; like to the skip of a flea, my tongue shall bound forward. So, passing over the miraculous skill with which the horse pointed out which was a gentle, and which but a working knave ; which maiden sighed for a husband, and which should presently have one ; which card showed a king, and which but only a valet, at last demands the fellow, — ‘ And now I would know how many good monasteries there be ?’ The beast snorted. — ‘ Tell me how many honest nuns all the convents contain.’ Again he snorted, lifted up his foot, and paused before he put it down, as if it said — ‘ One,

perchance, but I doubt it.' So the people laughed, and said, 'The horse was no slanderer.' And now the owner bawled 'Tell me, on thy good faith, how many concubines doth John White the prior, commonly called the Bull of Bermondsey, entertain at this present?' Then began the horse to number them with his foot, beating the ground more than twenty times, so that it seemed he was not like to leave off."

"But what has this to do with the subject of my concern?"

"Much: for the people cried out the horse was right; some said he ought to be burned for his magical knowledge; but all exclaimed against the prior of Bermondsey. Whereupon said I, 'The abbot of Leadenhall not less deserves your notice; for from his house it is known that a communication has been opened with the neighbouring convent, by which the priests of the Trinity pass to comfort the nuns of St. Helen, by

other means than confession. The cry was repeated, and ran through the whole assembly like wild-fire. Marry, said they, all monasteries ought to be pulled down, and that it would be a glorious commencement to deal with the convent of St. Helen. So some of the crowd ran that way."

"What followed?"

"Why the rest of the rabble, with me in the thick of them. Marvellous to relate! when they got to Bishopsgate, there were the king's commissioners, just entering the building to enquire into the concerns of the same. The mob rushed in — and what think you followed?"

"My wit is no more: I cannot guess; so unfold what you would say, without seeking conjecture from me, and do it with speed."

"Your pardon, Edmund, but I must needs make pause, or thy pale, sad, and languid countenance will be so rudely

convulsed by sudden mirth, it shall be impossible to restore thy features again to proper composure. They found the pious Egbert in the convent, locked in the close embrace of a young and marvellously beautiful nun."

"Indeed!"

"It is true I can avouch, for I myself saw the lovers hunted out; and truly, from the glimpse I had of the girl, Egbert's taste was not bad in making such a selection. I saw her but for a moment, but more time was not wanting to determine that she was pretty. Now burst thy sides with laughter."

"Tell me what has befallen the rest of the sisterhood."

"That I know not; only this one was turned out for the sport of the mob: but still you doubt, for you laugh not. I saw them forth with my own eyes; so be merry: I saw them both; and the name of the nun I afterwards found was sister Mariana."

Had a thunder-bolt fallen, Edmund could not have evinced more sudden emotion than was called forth by this intelligence. He was speechless for some moments ; and when able to question Bray on the subject again, receiving but a confirmation of his previous statement, he offered no reply, but rushed out of the house in a state of frenzy not to be described.

Scarcely knowing what he did, he ran to the convent. He learned that the whole of the sisterhood had been expelled ; but of that with respect to which he was most solicitous, namely, the course taken by the nun who had been given to the fury of the mob, he heard so many contradictory reports, that he could place confidence in none. Some declared that she had been seen repairing to Southwark ; others described a horseman to have placed her before him on his saddle, and carried her with him towards Hertfordshire ; and many

declared she was at that moment in the vicinity of the convent.

Several hours were thus consumed in profitless enquiry before he again thought of directing his steps towards Lord Erpingham. It was late when he reached Fickett's Fields. There was every appearance of the whole family having retired to rest for the night. By the front he could not gain admission; but having an exact knowledge of the premises, he found no difficulty in making his entrance behind, from the lane which has more than once been named, which connected Fickett's Fields and Chancery Lane. He perceived a light in one room, which he knew to be Lord Erpingham's study: thither he proceeded in silence; and just as Ferdinand had raised his arm to strike a mortal blow, Edmund opening the door, presented himself before his astonished friend, pale as a spectre from sickness, fatigue, and grief,—the living picture of despair.

CHAP. II.

"The paleness of united rage and sorrow overspread his face; he tottered feebly from the violence of his emotion, and large drops, rage distilled, stood on his sternly furrowed brow."

Highways and By-ways.

THE door by which Edmund entered was behind the chair in which Lord Erpingham sat, so that the latter saw not the apparition which had produced so fearful an impression on Ferdinand. The violent and sudden agitation of the Mexican, and the falling dagger, forced themselves on his attention; and the still wildly glaring, though averted eye of Ferdinand, directed him to the cause of that which had filled him with amazement. He saw alive the youth he had

mourned as dead, but wearing so ghastly an aspect, that he seemed even then to have come there but to die.

Nor was Edmund less astonished than those whom he had surprised. He expected to find Lord Erpingham alone; for, from his regard for the comforts of others, it was little likely that he could have detained any one from his bed till that hour. To have seen Ferdinand there at all had amazed; but to find the favoured secretary of the peer, his own preserver and friend, and the near relation of Mariana, about to plunge a dagger in the undefended bosom of his liberal benefactor, had in it something so monstrous and extravagant, that he actually doubted the evidence of his senses, while he beheld the resignation of Lord Erpingham, and the fiery wrath, succeeded by horrible consternation, which marked the deportment of Ferdinand.

“What can this mean?” he exclaimed;

"are all men mad !— Are all the opposites of what they seem !"

" Edmund ! — and living !" cried Ferdinand ; and he advanced as if he would have resumed his dagger.

Edmund regarded this movement with suspicion, and stepped forward to prevent Ferdinand from taking the weapon from the ground.

" What would you, madman ?" he demanded.

" I would fulfil an oath ; and execute just vengeance on a wretch who has no right to life."

" Your senses are bewildered by the misery which has fallen on Mariana : such language can have no application to Lord Erpingham."

" Unhappily, for his own sake," said Lord Erpingham, " Ferdinand is of a different opinion, out of which he cannot be reasoned."

" You speak truth ; you cannot reason me into perjury."

"Yet perjury itself were scarcely worse than murder," Edmund remarked.

"None can shrink from murder with more abhorrence than I do; but the virtuous avenger of a dear wronged relative, while shedding the blood of her destroyer, takes not that crime upon his soul."

"You rave."

"I may, shortly. The innocent victim of hypocrisy and fraud shall yet be remembered."

"I abhor the crime, and detest the perpetrator," cried Edmund, "with as much sincerity of hatred as you can do; but what vengeance were it to direct your wrath against Lord Erpingham? He was not the wretch who sought Mariana's destruction."

"I speak not of Mariana," said Ferdinand; "she, I thank Heaven, I have been so happy as to place beyond the reach of danger."

"Indeed! have you then seen her?"

"Seen her?"

“Speak — Have you seen her? Did she fly to you? Did Mariana find you, when forced from her convent?”

“Of what do you speak?” demanded Ferdinand, who, alarmed for Mariana, forgot for a moment the purpose which till then had wholly occupied his mind.

“Can it be possible that you have not yet heard of the baseness of Egbert?”

“Egbert!” repeated Ferdinand, who at the mention of the name remembered with horror what he had heard in connection with it that night. “What of him? — What of Mariana!”

“I know not how to frame my speech to meet the ear of a fond relative; but have you nothing learned of the false ecclesiastic being this day surprised in the convent of St. Helen?”

“You hesitate to pour into my ear all you have learned. What dreadful sequel remains behind? Tell me all.”

“Alas! it is my affliction to know that he was found with Mariana, (some vile

contrivance of his, I doubt not, caused her to be alone with him,) and thereupon she was led forth with reproach and insult, and exposed to the coarse mockery of an inflamed multitude."

"Gracious God!" cried Lord Erpingham, starting from his chair, and clasping his hands with an expression of the most heart-rending agony, "can it be possible that in one eventful hour I should discover my long-sought children, who might have become the joy of my declining day, only to see one lift his hand against his parent's life, and to know the other given up as infamous, to the derision of a thoughtless populace!"

Ferdinand seemed like one stunned. He staggered, and stretched out his hands for support.

"A dizziness has come over me," he cried; "I cannot see the objects before me. Am I still on earth? It is scarcely possible! This must be hell; and those who pass for men are fiends of darkness."

“ I know not but it is,” said Lord Erpingham. “ I cease to recognise the ordinary feelings of human beings in the enormities pressed in frightful succession on my startled senses. It has been the object of my life to prepare myself in all cases to bow with resignation to those visitations which it might be the will of Heaven should fall on me. I thought—I hoped I had endured enough in my younger days to appease the wrath which my wanderings had provoked, and little deemed that an avenging God would rise thus terrible in his anger to punish my transgressions.”

“ You speak incoherently, my lord,” replied Edmund ; “ nor can I marvel that you do so. The situation in which I found you might be sufficient to shake reason, then, to see one whom you thought to behold no more, start as it were from the grave, and lastly, to learn that your revered friend, Egbert, stands proved one of the vilest miscreants on

earth, and consequently to know, that your despised nephew has been of all men living most cruelly outraged, accounts but too well for your wandering speech."

"It is you, Edmund, who know not of what you speak. For Clifford — poor Clifford, my heart may well bleed, but not even his melancholy fate can press so heavily on it as that which you have witnessed here."

"I confess my lord, my own grief has been augmented, and my wonder excited, to see a weapon threatening your days, grasped by the hand of one from whom you merited boundless gratitude and devotion."

"But he," said Lord Erpingham, "who was about to number me with the dead, has proved himself to be no other than my own child, and the brother of Mariana, his supposed niece."

"What new wonders fill my ears! Can it be possible that you speak the language of reason?"

“ Aye, and of truth. The being so fondly loved, now a destitute, if not — dreadful thought! — a guilty wanderer, is no other than my daughter, the representative of the incomparably fair one, formerly my wife, whom you well know I never ceased to mourn as prematurely claimed by Heaven.”

“ Can it be then, that Ferdinand and Mariana are those respecting whom your enquiries have been multiplied through so many years ?”

Ferdinand now spoke. “ In the midst of that horrible whirlwind of surprise and misery which has assailed me, and almost bereft me of all my faculties, some sounds have struck on my ear which thrill me, I know not why, with a sensation against which I thought myself sufficiently fortified by incredulity. Unappealed to for such purpose, you, Edmund, have but now spoken that which confirms what I rejected as a fabrication some few moments since. Your

name was mentioned, and Lord Erpingham asserted that you could corroborate what he had stated. I believed he would not have ventured this, but that he knew you to be dead, and I scorned the supposed artifice. You have said what refutes this suspicion."

"I had used fewer words," said Lord Erpingham, "for my own life, than I lately uttered to save a son from crime."

"My lord, my lord, I know not what to say. I know not whether still to suspect, condemn, and pursue, or to fall at your feet in penitence for the past. Even now, as though it were but recent, I remember the awful moments which preceded the death of Teutila. I recal the anguish with which I reflected that I was about to lose for ever the father from whom I derived existence. Could he so fearfully deceive me in his last moments? No—no; it could not be. He could not seek to arm me against a guiltless parent. Besides, it now occurs

to me, that others saw the mangled remains of my sister, of Teutila's daughter, and having neither interest to pursue nor revenge to gratify, they bore testimony to the truth of what he told."

"Accustomed as you have been through life to regard me as a monster of perfidy, I should doubt of gaining belief, if it were not in my power to furnish proofs so unequivocal of that which negatives the charge on which Teutila's resentment was grounded, that you shall not be able for an instant to question them."

"You may be able to make it probable that Isabella fell not by your hand, but you cannot ; — so I must still venture to say, — prove that you did not consult your own safety by leaving her to her fate ; and in my judgment, there is little difference between the guilt which boldly strikes the victim, and the cowardice which basely betrays to the murderous arm of another."

“ The dismal confusion which we all have shared, is not dispelled for me,” said Edmund. “ You talk of crimes familiarly, the remote mention of which makes humanity shudder. What mysterious connection can there be between these and Lord Erpingham ?”

Lord Erpingham replied, “ I will explain all, if I can sufficiently extricate my thoughts from the melancholy themes to which they now turn, with anguish which none but a father can imagine, which not even a father can describe. For no consideration peculiar to myself would I now waste one moment in speech. But, Ferdinand, it is most important that you should know that Teutila was deceived, and that up to this hour you have lived in error with respect to my conduct.”

“ I know not how to act : I would not hear a dead parent aspersed, nor would I continue, if such I have ever been, the enemy of a father who lives. I cannot

persuade myself that Teutila would wantonly blacken your character in his dying hour; but, on the other hand, the warm emotion which I now remark cannot be assumed. Oh ! my lord, I will not think you can add such hypocrisy, even if guilty, to your other sins."

"At all events listen to me for a few moments. When I shall bring conviction to your mind, we can better unite to seek Mariana, whose name I mention, not without feeling a glow of vain impatience to pursue her wandering footsteps, while I know that it is but too probable, that the faster we seek to overtake, the farther we shall find ourselves from the accomplishment of our object."

"The embarrassment arising from that painful reflection," said Edmund, "I had found, before I came hither, sufficiently distracting. Yet in the midst of my anxiety for the dear one, I cannot but covet to hear what you would reveal."

“ I will proceed with little delay or preface. Resume your weapon, Ferdinand, now you are calm and can listen ; and if, when I have ended, you still regard me as one against whom vengeance ought to be directed on account of Isabella, by him who gave me being, and who, as he is the Creator, will be the Judge of all, I swear unrepiningly to yield my bosom to your dagger.”

CHAP. III.

So after that he long had her complained,
His hondis wronge, and said that was to say,
And with his tearis salt her breast berained,
He gan those tearis wipin off full drey.

CHAUCER.

IN sadness and in silence Ferdinand and Edmund awaited the narrative of Lord Erpingham, who, after a momentary pause, to recall in their proper order the events of past years, spoke as follows.

“Time, which veils events from the multitude, cannot obscure in my mind those which connected themselves with the early part of my life. Imagine not when I name Fernando Cortes, that I am about to enter into the details of Spanish conquest. Some matters connected there-

with must be mentioned; but on these I will not enlarge.

“ It was my hap to study at Salamanca, while the daring Cortes was in that city. Subsequently, circumstances, which I will not recount, carried me to Trinidad, and there, most unexpectedly, I again saw my old acquaintance at the head of an armament which had been fitted out from Cuba, to prosecute the wonderful discoveries in the new continent, which had just begun to fill the world with amazement.

“ The delightfully romantic prospects held out by such an expedition allured adventurers of all ranks, to embark in them their wealth with their persons.

“ Cortes recognised me with pleasure, and invited me to share in the enterprise which he had been appointed to conduct. Little persuasion was needed to prevail on one of my ardent character, to avail himself of the favourable opportunity for beholding foreign lands, which rumour

madly described as a fairy region, replete with all the attractions which might suffice to form another Paradise. I consented to become the companion of the Spanish commander, and to avoid wakening jealousies among the other followers of Cortes, it was determined that I should pass for a Spaniard, under the title of Don Gomez.

“ We soon saw St. Juan de Ulua, landed and commenced our intercourse with the natives. I pause not to describe our reception, or the mutual astonishment which our arms, horses, and appearance, and their wealth and simple manners inspired. These are matters of general history, and I therefore proceed to what immediately connects itself with my own fortunes on our arrival at Zempoalla.

“ The crafty Cortes, at that place, soon ingratiated himself with the natives, and excited them to rebel against their monarch. From Zempoalla he advanced against the Tlascalans, but unwilling to

confide too much in his new friends, he left me at Zempoalla with a small party of soldiers to watch their motions, and to guard against treachery. I found them the simple confiding beings they appeared ; and curious to witness their mode of living, I cultivated the friendship of the cazique, and mingled with his family. I deemed not that I risked much by doing so, but I soon found my peace of mind was gone. His daughter was lovely. The scorching sun of that climate had respected her bewitching features, and she might have vied with the proudest beauties of Europe.

“ The efforts which she made to instruct me in the language of the country endeared her to my heart — in a word, I loved. We were married according to the forms used in Europe ; and blest with the society of one as amiable in her disposition, as fascinating in her person, I exulted in perfect happiness ; and when Cortes ordered the destruction of the

ships, which had carried us thither, to cut off all retreat, none felt less regret than I did, that a step so decisive had been taken.

“ The Tlascalans having been conquered, and from enemies converted into allies, Cortes and his followers advanced to Mexico. My wife, who at my request had been baptized by the name of Isabella, would not separate from me, but resolutely followed the army through that painful and fatiguing march. She repined not at the hardships which she sustained ; but she now became less capable of bearing them than formerly. The moment drew near when Isabella was to become a mother, and this inclined her to listen to my earnest persuasions to return to Zempoalla. I obtained leave to conduct her thither, but I found it impossible to do so. At Tlascala she was compelled to close her journey ; and there she gave birth to a son. I rejoined the army, but as soon as she was sufficiently recovered

to go forward, I had sufficient influence with the commander to get myself sent on a mission to Zempoalla. Thither I now succeeded in conveying Isabella. On gaining the abode of the cazique, we found it the seat of mourning. A child about two months old, the offspring, not of the mother of Isabella, but of a second wife, had expired that night. This incident at a period so remote, may seem of little moment, but few words will suffice to prove it of vast importance.

The inhabitants of Zempoalla, generally, had now learned to look on the Spaniards with very different feelings from those which they had formerly cherished. Instead of regarding them as children of the sun, and as more than mortal, they considered them a band of depredators, who fled from their own sterile shore or from the ocean, to ravage a fertile country. The *Accursed Race*, and the *Scum of the Sea*, were the appellations bestowed on those who had

lately been almost worshipped. The mad thirst for rapine which had degraded the adherents of Cortes, produced this change ; and disinterested friendship had now given place to the bitterest enmity.

The cazique, while he condemned the misconduct of the Spaniards, did not confound me with those who perpetrated outrages in which, thank God, I never participated ; but he foresaw that others would not ~~make~~ a like distinction, and he trembled for the safety of an infant which derived the breath of life from me. — A thought, — a happy one, we considered it, suggested itself : he proposed that my infant should be received as his, while his child was interred as mine.

“ I have now explained the circumstances which caused you to be looked upon as the of son Teutila. As yet I have produced no voucher for the truth of my narrative, but this shall not be wanting

when I have touched on another part of the subject. The scenes of blood through which Cortes waded to sustain the first efforts of his ambition, I have no leisure to pourtray. This I may remark, that many of his actions which were most revolting to humanity, were not impolitic. I freely, during all the years I remained there, inveighed against those which I deemed cruel: he impetuously defended them; yet my frankness and my opposition produced in him but momentary irritation, and the very resistance which he met from me, had the effect of winning his entire confidence.

“ It was through this, that, when in consequence of the reports made to his prejudice at Madrid, he had reason to expect the commissioners who had been sent out, would soon receive instructions to put him under an arrest, he entreated me to visit Spain with dispatches from him, there to offer such representations

as I felt justified in making with respect to his fidelity to his king. If Cortes had forgotten humanity, he had never ceased to be loyal. I was shocked at the insolence with which he treated the Mexican kings, and the stern barbarity which consigned a number of brave men to the flames for making that resistance to the Spaniards which it was their duty to offer. Such conduct seemed to me more like the raging fury of a demon than the wrath of a man. It was in vain Cortes maintained that the terrible infliction which sacrificed a few Indians, would prove the means of saving the lives of hundreds of Spaniards, and was therefore an act of mercy. My opinion remained unchanged, nor could I bring myself to a belief, that to accomplish any object, or to guard against any future danger, *humanity* would have recourse to such frightful means ; but while the barbarity of my old companion disgusted, to his king—to Spain, he was faith-

ful ; and if his cruelties have stained her name, his aim while committing them was to confirm her sway.

“ The ship in which I was to depart was ready to sail. I purposed taking my son and my daughter, then but a few months old, with me, that they might be educated in Europe. For this purpose I was on my way from the vessel to Zempoalla, when I and the few individuals then with me, found ourselves suddenly attacked by a body of men, employed, as I was subsequently assured, by the Spanish commissioners, to prevent my proceeding to execute the mission with which I stood charged. I was severely wounded ; and incapable of defending myself, had nearly fallen from loss of blood. It was then that the gentle Isabella proved her courage equal to her love : she scorned to consult her own safety by flight, but boldly remained to sustain and assist her disabled husband. Through her generous efforts,

with much difficulty I was conveyed to the ship, and the mariners fearing some new attempt would be made to detain them, commenced their voyage. When I recovered health and recollection, so far as to be conscious of my situation, the ship was already far away from the western continent.

“ Not to pause on the events which detained me in Madrid, and the profitless way in which some years of my life were consumed, I at once hasten to that which must interest you as well in your real as in your suppositious character. Weary of Spain, I brought Isabella to England. — You start, and the frown of incredulity again lowers on your brow ; but your scepticism shall be speedily at an end. I say, I brought my beloved wife to England : her health, alas ! declined. — I hoped her children, for whom I had sent, would arrive to cheer and revive their fond mother ; but I had news that Teutila was no longer at Zempoalla.”

“ It is true,” Ferdinand said, “ that Teutila was for a season compelled to leave Zempoalla during my very childhood, but his absence was not protracted beyond a year.

“ In the interim, my agent had received the intelligence which I have mentioned. I would have sought Teutila myself, but I could not quit Isabella in the situation to which she was reduced. At last it was my affliction to see her cut off in her prime. Mine was the sad duty to close her dying eyes, and to consign her mortal remains to the earth. You have seen me weeping over the spot which contains her dust ; and gazed with me on the statue which faintly commemorates her beauties. Little did I dream, while your eyes rested on that image, that you were contemplating the sculptor’s record of the features of your mother.

“ Few words remain to be added : — when no longer detained by the sick

couch of a declining wife, I prepared to seek those who might best remind me of the treasure I had lost. It was then that I received the news that Teutila was dead, and that my children were no longer on the American shore. This alone detained me in Europe ; but my enquiries have been continued up to this day, faint as the hope had grown, that mine would yet be the joy of shedding the tear of parental love on my long lost offspring."

"Your narrative is consistent, my lord," said Ferdinand ; "but —"

"You would say, you look in vain for the proofs which I have promised. — These shall be forthcoming."

Lord Erpingham now produced a small packet of papers : Ferdinand glanced at them, and perceived that they purported to be written by the deceased Lady Erpingham. It was in the form of a narrative of her life in England ; in the course of which fre-

quent mention was made of the ceaseless kindness of her lord.

“ These papers,” said Ferdinand, “ bring no conviction to my mind ; they indeed bear evident marks of coming from one who was well acquainted with that part of the world in which I first saw the light ; but it follows not that they were written by her whose name is attached to them. Such might have been forged.”

“ But what motive could any one have for forging them ? These are not the production of a moment ; and could I have anticipated that they were likely to be wanted on an occasion like this ?”

“ It is not probable, my lord. But writing was an accomplishment of which Isabella had hardly attempted to possess herself while she remained in Zempoalla, and I can therefore form no judgment of the value of these papers from any remark I am enabled to make on the characters traced on them.”

“ But,” said Edmund, “ when no motive can be assigned for the production of such a narrative, ought a doubt to remain ?”

“ Yes ; for though it is difficult to imagine a motive for doing what has have been done, I can with less difficulty suppose these writings to have been forged from mere wantonness and folly, than I can believe them to have been furnished here in England by one who, before the date of them, had been murdered in America.”

“ If,” Edmund remarked, “ you can hold proofs like these as nothing, I know not what can convince you.”

“ That which I shall next produce,” said Lord Erpingham, taking from a drawer a picture, which he now laid before Ferdinand, who started at the sight.

“ This,” said he, “ is indeed a surprise ! That painting is the exact resemblance of one which I have brought

with me to Europe, by means of which I was enabled to recognize your countenance on the day when I was wounded by the archer.

“ A painting like this was executed by Isabella in her native country. From the circumstances under which we came to Europe, we had no opportunity of bringing it with us. I requested her to reproduce it, and my likeness in the Spanish costume, such as she saw me at the time of our marriage, with her own, attired as she was on that memorably happy day she accordingly painted here.”

“ I cannot doubt that this was indeed the production of her pencil. The unrivalled delicacy of her touch, and the peculiarities of her country, which I remark, assure me that it can have been painted by none but her.”

Lord Erpingham then produced another picture. In this Isabella had repre-

sented herself surrounded with English objects of splendour, clasped in the arms of a fond husband, but looking with regret towards two children, separated from her by the ocean. But a vessel then on the point of sailing at the command of her lord, prepared to direct its course that way, as it should seem, for the purpose of reclaiming them.

“ Doubt and suspicion are no more,” cried Ferdinand ; “ these Mexican characters explain to me that Isabella, blest in every thing but the society of her children, was living in England, the happy wife of Lord Erpingham. — Oh, my lord ! my father I may call you now, on my knees I implore forgiveness ; and further, implore you to join me in supplicating the offended Majesty of Heaven to pardon the wretched son whose arm was lifted against the bosom of his parent.”

“ Rise, my son,” cried Lord Erping-

ham, lifting Ferdinand from the floor, on which he had prostrated himself; —
“ Rise! A dismal oath, founded on false information, had nearly betrayed you into the commission of crime. But a God of mercy knows how to pardon error. This would to me be a moment of unalloyed bliss, but for the dreadful apprehensions which uncertainty of your sister’s present situation suggests. Would I had sooner known my children were so near me! That you are such, I cannot doubt; but why are you called Ferdinand, and she Mariana?”

“ It was the wish of Teutila, after the mangled and disfigured body which we mistook for that of Isabella had been found, that we should cease to bear the names of Charles and Henrietta, which once were ours, and we received Mexican appellations. Subsequently we were baptized at Madrid by those which now belong to us.”

“ But for that, I should have had my attention sooner drawn to you, and a happy discovery had terminated all sorrow, for my enquiries would have conquered your reserve, and Mariana would not have been exposed to peril.”

“ Alas! my lord, I fear, had you pressed me too closely, I should have hastened to deprive you of life, from a fear that the execution of my purpose might be prevented, if you once came to suspect my relationship to Teutila. Such was my intention, if menaced with premature discovery. I wished, before I struck the blow, to make you sensible that you fell not by the hand of a common assassin, or probably both of us would long have perished, you as my victim, and I in the character of your murderer.”

“ In this,” said Lord Erpingham, “ I wish to recognize the merciful interposition of Providence. Fain would I hope, that it will not terminate here, and

that we may yet regain the object of our common solicitude, such as a father, a brother, and a lover could desire to see her."

CHAP. IV.

“ Weak as thou art, yet hapless must thou know
The toils of flight, or some severer woe !”

COLLINS.

WHILE Lord Erpingham, Ferdinand, and Edmund were distracted with doubts and fears growing on the absence of Mariana, she remained at the house to which she had been conducted, a prey to miserable rumination, appalling wonder, and indescribable alarm. Though she could ill conceive a motive for acting with that duplicity and violence which she suspected had been practised and was intended towards her, she found it impossible to account for what she had seen by any supposition calculated to dissipate alarm. However confused

her notion of the particular peril which awaited her, she could not forget what she had beheld; and considering the human face which she had seen to be the terrifying evidence of murder, and remembering the way in which it had been removed, it seemed past a doubt that evil was intended.

With this impression on her mind, she was anxious to quit the house. For that purpose she stole from her chamber shortly after midnight. She crossed the landing and approached the stairs, when she perceived a light in an apartment, the door of which opened on the staircase. Concluding from this, that the mistress of the house had not yet retired to rest, she paused. That the inmate of the chamber was waking she was certain, for she even heard her voice, but without being able to understand the words which she uttered. Mariana judged it prudent to return to her apartment, and wait some time longer, in

the hope that the light would shortly be extinguished, and the object of her alarm asleep.

But when another hour had elapsed, and she had returned to the landing, she saw the light as before, and heard the voice of the female by whom she had been so cordially received. She could even distinguish her expressions. Her tone was vehement and impassioned, while she exclaimed :

“ I cannot recall thee to life ! Thou art fled for ever ! Thou canst yield no more suffering to gratify vengeance.”

Mariana shuddered at the fury which seemed unsatisfied even with the destruction of the victim, and regretted that the flight of life had left the object of her wrath incapable of sustaining new tortures.

“ Thy veins have been drained !” the voice continued. “ Be thy blood on the head of the shedder.”

The daring impiety which seemed

scornfully to brave the just wrath of the deity, and to exult with fiendlike joy in the recollection of murder, inspired horror, even more insupportable than the terror which had before seized on the astonished Mariana. She stumbled, and had nearly fallen. The noise she made in endeavouring to save herself, led her to expect instant discovery, as she had pressed against the door of the room from which the sounds proceeded. But the mistress of the house was too much occupied with her own ideas to perceive the effects of the accident. Again the forlorn and timid fugitive shrunk back to the chamber in which she had wasted the preceding hours. Long afraid to venture forth, when at length she did so, Mariana had little expectation of finding circumstances more favourable to the flight she meditated. But she had summoned all her resolution, and was determined in any case to attempt leaving the house. She looked

with eager curiosity towards the door from which she had perceived the light. There was no longer any appearance of a lamp being kept burning, but day now began to dawn. The return of morning might sufficiently account for the flame within the chamber being extinguished, but she had the additional comfort of hearing its dreaded inhabitant no more.

She descended the stairs, and in a few seconds was so fortunate as to reach the door. She carefully unlocked it, when she found it was still held fast by a bolt. Endeavouring to withdraw this, it emitted a harsh creaking sound. Mariana feared the noise would wake the mistress of the house, and dared not even breathe while listening to ascertain if this had occurred. Mariana thought she heard a footstep, and immediately after, was certain that a door had been unlocked. Not doubting but her movements were observed, she made a new effort to return the bolt, when the noise which it had previously caused was

renewed. Some one was on the stairs. Mariana looked and beheld a female form. It was impossible for her to doubt that this was the being who had alarmed her, whose well known voice now thrilled her whole frame, while it demanded,

“Is any one there?”

Mariana paused for a moment, but did not answer. The demand was repeated.

“Who is it tries the bolt?”

Mariana hesitated no longer, but forced the bolt back, and raised the latch without speaking.

“Art thou my lodger — art thou the timid one I last night received?” the voice now enquired.

“I am she,” Mariana replied, at the same moment opening the door, and leaving the house without daring to throw a glance behind.

“Whither wouldst thou? — what has disturbed thee? — tarry I say, and speak.”

But the call was vain. Having, as

she believed, effected her escape from a dreadful prison, Mariana thought not of explanation, but fled with all the expedition she could use.

Urged by instinctive fear to escape from present danger, she continued her retreat. An hour's flight had removed her to some distance from Greenwich. Traversing the bank of the river, it was no trifling source of grief to know her situation such, that to her all paths which might present themselves were the same. All she could hope was, that she had got too far from her last abode to be overtaken. What next was to be done she had yet to determine.

Mariana had but just ventured to abate that speed which at first she had considered essential to her safety, when she saw a boat put in. The man who was in it landed, approached, and accosted her.

“Why are you forth so early, fair one?” he enquired ; addressing himself

to her with the air of one who did not meet her for the first time.

Mariana made no answer. She did not even look towards the speaker, but quickened her pace with agitation not to be described, for she knew the voice to be that of the individual who had seemed to befriend her, by conducting her to the dwelling which she had just left. To her disturbed mind it seemed clear, that the female from whom she had resolved to fly, had despatched her accomplice by the way he now came to cut off her retreat.

In this idea she was fully confirmed, when she heard herself called upon in a loud voice not to go forward; and when, no attention being paid to his words, she perceived that the man was rapidly following. It was in vain that she attempted to run; his superior speed made escape utterly impossible.

“Your pardon, lady, for my boldness,” he said; “but I cannot meet you

here thus early, and see you in such strange disorder, without detaining you for a brief space.

“ Forbear — forbear !” she exclaimed ;
“ I seek not to injure you.”

“ I suspected not that you did.”

“ Then permit that I may pass without further let. I will never mention what I know — never tell what I have seen.”

“ I would comply with your request, but there is a wildness in your manner, which moves my curiosity so strongly, that I must take liberty to question you further. Why have you quitted thus early the hospitable roof under which I placed you ?”

“ The hospitable roof !”

“ The hospitable roof, I say. Such it is ; and such I doubted not you would have considered it. There I knew you could rest securely.”

“ And eternally,” replied Mariana with a tone in which reproach was blended with sorrow.

The individual to whom these words were addressed, seemed all astonishment.

“What is the import of your words?” he demanded. “You speak of eternal rest, as if it were possible that your life could have been in danger.”

“It was in danger.”

“For what cause, in what way?”

“I cannot explain the cause, nor can I tell the horrid means intended to be used.”

“This is some fatal mistake. Believe me, you have been the dupe of causeless fear. Come, return with me, and be convinced.”

“Oh! no—no. I will not return. If my life is sought, kill me here. I will not voluntarily suffer myself again to be led to that den of murder.”

“Of murder!”

“Even so. You start with surprise. If it be real, you will be sad to learn the horrors I have known.”

“ For Heaven’s sake, tell me to what you allude.”

“ I cannot think it needful. You seemed so intimate with the dreadful woman to whose care you gave me, that it is scarcely possible for her to be the wretch she is, and you ignorant of her real character.”

“ Your senses are bewildered. Back with me and rest awhile, that sound reason may return. I fear not to aver, that in this realm of England there lives not a more honourable lady, than she to whose house I last night conducted you.”

“ This is past belief.”

“ By all the saints above, I speak but the truth. Affliction, sore affliction, she has known, but this makes her the more indulgent to others. Trust me, your alarm is unfounded, your suspicions unjust and idle.”

“ If you think what you say, I grieve to unfold what has chanced to come to my knowledge.”

“ You move my wonder much ; but rest assured, that you are abused.”

“ I have appalling proofs of the contrary. She has imbrued her hands in blood.”

“ Impossible !”

“ I have witnessed the restless throes of guilt. In the dead hour of night, I have heard her offend Heaven by daring exclamations.”

“ In all you are deceived.”

“ It cannot be ; for I have even seen the remains of her victim.

“ Of *her* victim !”

“ Nothing less. This brought conviction to a mind not naturally prone to suspect evil. It was therefore that I ventured forth, and then it was my fortune to hear her awful voice uttering exclamations which told that she pondered on her past crime, but not that she repented it.”

“ This is inconceivable ! — yet stay — a thought breaks in upon my mind which

explains all ! — you speak of the remains of one murdered.”

“ I do.”

“ You have seen the head of an aged man, which rests in her cabinet.”

“ I have. Was it then known to you when you took me to that horrible abode ?”

“ You have beholden what might justify alarm, but what proves no guilt.”

“ Seek not to deceive me further.”

“ I seek but to undeceive. Listen, and be convinced. Remarked you not the lady was in mourning ?”

“ I did.”

“ She mourns for her beloved and celebrated father, Sir Thomas More. You cannot but have heard that that virtuous man lately perished on a scaffold. His head was mounted on a pole by London Bridge. Some few weeks since, it so fortunèd, that it was blown down, and was then conveyed to his daughter, Mrs. Roper, whom you have

seen. The melancholy relic she would not exchange for the crown of him who willed her parent's death ; and filial love preserves it with pious care in a cabinet purposely fashioned to receive it. On this she nightly sheds her tears, and finds no solace more sweet than that which she derives from seeming to converse with the sad memorial of one so dear to her in life, so lamented in death. Grief will sometimes move strong emotion, and abhorrence of the cruelty by which her father fell, may have caused her to utter exclamations, which you, not comprehending the cause of them, would regard as indications of guilt ; but if there be virtue on earth, believe me, her heart is one of the hallowed temples in which it resides."

" Your earnestness, I think, cannot be counterfeit ; — yet still I doubt, for all that I have heard, that awful woman. If the tale which you have told be veritable, why was that same cabinet re-

moved with such anxious care from the chamber in which I was to rest ?”

“ The kindness to which I confided you, wished to spare you the shock which you have received, and to indulge in the mournful luxury of sorrowing over all that remained to her of her immortal progenitor. Her benevolence was foiled by your attention being so promptly called to that object from which her thoughts are never separated.”

“ Can I have wronged a virtuous being so grossly as to have taken for a murderess one who is truly good, and the victim of misfortune ?”

“ Unintentionally you have : believe me, appearances are sometimes little to be trusted.”

He uttered the last words with peculiar emphasis, his eyes riveted on the countenance of Mariana. She shrank from his gaze, and recalling the situation in which she had been placed within the last four-and-twenty hours, half con-

jectured, that he was aware she had so recently been pursued as a shameless wanton, by a scoffing and reviling mob.

“Come,” he added, “allow me to conduct you to the fittest asylum for youth and beauty like yours. Dismiss your fears; but if, till you can obtain confirmation of what I have said, you prefer residing elsewhere, tell me whither you would go, and I will aid you in your own way. Give me your confidence; I will prove that I have some slight claim to it, by not enquiring what affliction has brought you to the situation in which I have found you, though I might have been forgiven for doing so, seeing it was not at Greenwich that we met for the first time.”

Mariana looked surprised. Hitherto fear had wholly occupied her mind, and her attention had been directed towards the actions, and not towards the features of the individual who had so providen-

tially been sent to her assistance. But now she was convinced that he spoke truth, for she recalled the countenance of the master of the tent in which she had reposed at Canterbury.

“ I perceive your astonishment is great,” said Clifford ; “ but humble as I seem, and as I am, — doubt not my sincerity. I found you in distress, I see you helpless and alone. A wounded heart I would not probe in wantonness, but I invite you to claim such assistance as you may need. Could gold relieve you, it shall be forthcoming.”

Mariana looked with increased surprise on the speaker.

“ You marvel that the poor lowly being you recognize should be enabled to proffer gold. He who was with you, I speak of Edmund, left his purse in my tent. I have not used its contents to supply my own wants, but shall not scruple to have recourse to them for yours.

I think I risk little when I say that he would not think it possible to apply them better."

Mariana still hesitated, but could not help yielding credit to the representations of Clifford. His earnest entreaties prevailed on her to retrace her steps, and again to seek that house from which she had so hastily retreated.

CHAP. V.

'Tis not always
That Justice wins the prize on earth, — 'tis kept
For brighter climes, — 'tis made of brighter gems,
That, like yon stars, beam with unfading light.

ROCHE.

It was not without trembling that Mariana re-approached the dwelling of Mrs. Roper, and she felt no small embarrassment at meeting the female whom she had accused, as it now appeared, unjustly of murder.

To Mrs. Roper the conduct of Mariana was perfectly inexplicable; and when she again saw her with Clifford, she affected not that kindness and cordiality with which the wanderer had

been greeted on the preceding night. That Mariana should have fled at an hour so unseasonably early, for the apparent purpose of meeting Clifford, was a step not easily to be reconciled with female delicacy. Clifford was not slow to perceive that his own reception was different from that to which he had been accustomed ; he guessed the cause, and hesitated not to express what he thought.

“ My situation, Madam,” said he, “ is singular ; and I certainly feel, that little prone as you are to draw unfavourable conclusions from doubtful circumstances, you cannot but question the propriety of my conduct.”

“ I will not deny that the flight of this young stranger, and what I now see, pleases me not. On your representations, I last night received beneath this roof a female in distress. What has since occurred, leads with irresistible

force to the conclusion, that if her distress were not feigned, it was brought on by misconduct."

" You judge that her meeting with me this day was in consequence of a preconcerted plan. Believe me, madam, — you who have so kindly yielded me credence when all the rest of the world disdained to hear me — believe me now in this, the last hour I can hope to see you, that it was purely the effect of chance ; or rather, I speak it with reverence, the work of Providence."

" But that flight — that guilty flight, in opposition to my repeated calls."

" Of that you, madam, you, incredulous as you may feel at this moment, were the sole cause."

" How ! Did she meet with aught but kindness from me and mine."

" Through accident, she saw an object which, precious as it may be in the eyes of a fond lamenting daughter, was

well calculated to terrify a timid stranger."

The lady affected not to misunderstand that to which Clifford alluded, and he now proceeded to explain the misconception into which Mariana had fallen. His statement commanded belief, and the coldness and resentment which had previously manifested themselves were no more.

"Poor child!" she exclaimed, taking Mariana by the hand, "I wonder not at thy anxiety to fly, and grieve for the dismay of which I have been unwittingly the cause. Thy flight had made me sad, and I am much relieved to find thee neither thankless nor unworthy."

"Of the immediate cause of this fair one's distress," said Clifford, "I am wholly ignorant. It would ill become me to pry into it, but to one of her own sex, I doubt not the troubled bosom will freely reveal the sources of its woe. For me, having placed her where I know

she will meet with kind protection and discreet counsel, I must away."

"Do you take your departure to-day?"

"This hour even. The state of the tide already admonishes me that I have too long delayed, and now, honoured madam, we must part — I doubt not for ever."

"I hope not. I shall still pray for the happiness of witnessing your joyous return, and of knowing your fame vindicated — your fortunes re-established."

"Such dreams I may not cherish; but wherever I may be, on the tempestuous sea or in the arid desert, my humble supplications will not fail to ascend to the Giver of all good for your happiness. You, without wounding my pride, have enabled me to fly from scorn; and though assured by you, that you have but paid a debt in furnishing me as you have done, I shall remain eternally your debtor."

Tears of affectionate esteem trembled on his eyelids while he spoke. Turning to Mariana, he said,

“ It would give me joy to offer you further aid. Gladly would I seek him who was once my friend, at whose name I saw the ready tear spring, while I spoke this morning ; but my present situation is such that I cannot have that satisfaction. I leave you where you will find more efficient relief than I under the most favouring circumstances could supply. I dare remain no longer. — Adieu — Adieu madam ! — my friend — my preserver ! ”

He kissed with profound respect the extended hand of Mrs. Roper, and bowing to Mariana left the room.

Mrs. Roper recounted to Mariana the history of her sorrows. The recital was sad, but it emboldened the blushing guest to unfold the extraordinary circumstances which had brought them together. From the manner in which

she had been treated, from the tone in which Mrs. Roper had described her own situation, Mariana expected sympathy ; but her narrative produced a degree of emotion which astonished her. Sometimes it was interrupted by eager enquiries, and sometimes by fits of abstraction, which made it necessary for her to pause, or to repeat what she had uttered ; but when she came to state the manner in which the doors of the convent had been forced, and Egbert given up to the fury of the populace in the face of day, Mrs. Roper started from her chair, with a wildness in her look and manner for which Mariana could not account, and demanded in a loud tone,

“ Do you speak truth ? ”

“ Madam ! ”

“ Forgive me, thou dear fellow sufferer, that I ask the question ; but did you see it with your own eyes ? ”

“ I saw the wretch who would fain have destroyed me led forth by the

crowd, and pursued by their fierce resentment."

"Then God is just," Mrs. Roper exclaimed, with an expression of earnest devotion; "but Oh! that you had mentioned this sooner! Why did you let him withdraw, this being untold?"

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Clifford. But I forget that you knew him not as the victim of the monster whose crimes are at length disclosed to the world."

"Speak you of him who brought me hither?"

"Even of him — your preserver. By Egbert was the fame of Clifford blasted, and his fortunes ruined. The Avenger has at length hurled his thunderbolt at the guilty; but the innocent may be lost for want of timely succour. It may yet be possible to prevent Clifford from leaving the shores of his native country."

"What would you, madam?"

"We must pursue his steps, and bear

these glad tidings to the gallant heart about to become an exile. If we should be in time — if we can but save him, how shall his wife and little one rejoice to see the mighty change in his fortunes which this must bring about !”

While yet speaking, Mrs. Roper hastily put on her bonnet and mantle.

“ I must seek him instantly, or for him this happy chance may prove of no avail. You I fear are even now fatigued, yet I pray you be my companion, for my head is giddy with joy, and I shall but imperfectly recount what I have heard. — Can you make a new exertion ?”

“ O ! madam, in such a cause I cannot be sensible of pain ; I cannot know weariness. If I may be the means of conveying joy and peace to others, command me straight, and fear not that my weakness will interpose a difficulty in the way of your benevolence.”

With brief delay, Mariana and her

protectress left Greenwich. Mrs. Roper first directed her steps towards Podd's Elms. She did not exactly know the spot where Clifford had resided, for though her kindness would not have scorned to visit his humble habitation, the pride of Clifford disdained to move compassion by suffering her to behold the humble shed in which he who had once been the heir of fortune was lately constrained to hide his wife and helpless offspring. Mrs. Roper had known him in prosperity, and recognizing him in one of the lonely walks in which she had been accustomed to indulge after the death of her father, she commiserated his distress, believing him to be guilty. Her generous pity won his confidence, and he subsequently, at her request, recounted his story, and explained some of the peculiarities of his situation. She would fain have led him into a detailed exposition of his circumstances, with a view to judge how she might best

administer relief; but when he withdrew from her prying kindness, she respected his feelings too much to press him further, and applied herself to assist the victim of calumny in the manner which might least alarm his sensibility. A trifling sum, which had been due from Sir Thomas More to the father of Clifford, she magnified into a considerable debt, and by this virtuous artifice enabled the object of her bounty to provide himself with all that was requisite, both for the voyage he contemplated, and his future residence in an unknown country. She then exerted herself to find a vessel in which he could leave England, and succeeded in engaging the master of one which was proceeding to Cadiz, to undertake for his conveyance thither, and thence to procure him a passage to the new world. These efforts in his behalf had made it necessary that he should frequently visit Greenwich; but it was not till the eve of his depar-

ture, that he had permitted her to know where Elinor and her infant were sheltered. He had even concealed from her till then, that he had become a husband and a father; for, however anxious to explain away his supposed crime, he could not bring himself to reveal circumstances which might have the appearance of being brought forward to move that sort of compassion which directly pointed at pecuniary relief. Ignorant that he had a wife, Mrs. Roper, to guard as much as possible against explanations which might defeat her kind purpose, by proving that she in reality gave, while she professed but to pay, had enjoined him to the observance of strict secrecy. Bound by a promise which she exacted, he had never mentioned her name to Elinor, though he could not conceal the fact that he had been assisted by a friend. It was in consequence of these precautions that Mrs. Roper had

now some difficulty in ascertaining the exact spot.

But her pursuit was so far successful, that she found the hovel in which Clifford had resided. She derived little satisfaction from this discovery, as it was untenanted. She sighed on entering it, while she reflected on the dreadful vicissitudes of fortune experienced by him whose misery it had lately concealed ; but she did not allow sensibility to check exertion. Anxious to recal, if possible, the unfortunate object of her pursuit, she rushed to the water's edge, flattering herself that he might not yet be out of sight. It was in vain that her anxious glances were thrown over the river, she saw not Clifford ; but after remaining there for a few moments, she observed a boat at a great distance, moving towards her. At first, she entertained a hope that Clifford was in it, but as it neared the shore, she perceived that the rower nothing resembled him.

"Tell me," said Mrs. Roper, taking it for granted, in the eagerness of her anxiety, that the man who had just left the boat was capable of resolving the question, "where is he who lived in this cabin?"

The man replied, that the individual enquired for was then on board of a ship which was seen at some distance, and to which he pointed.

"And is the vessel now moving down the river?"

"She is under weigh; but I do not think she is moving. The wind is down, and she will not easily get through Woolwich Reach, I have a notion, this tide."

"Then out with thy boat again, and bear me to that ship. I will well requite thy labour."

The man was most willing to comply. He described himself to have just returned from putting the late inhabitant of the hovel on board, with his wife and child. "Lucky it was," he added,

“ that he had chanced to be near to assist ; but for that circumstance, they must have lost their passage.”

“ Would to Heaven it had so chanced,” she exclaimed.

The boat went expeditiously through the water, and gained on the ship. It had got so near that they could see those who were on deck, and Mrs. Roper thought she distinguished Clifford. In a few moments all doubt was removed, and she was certain that it was he. She enjoyed the further satisfaction of perceiving that she was recognized by Clifford. He waved his hand in answer to a similar action on her part, and pointing to Elinor and her child who stood near him with his left hand, his right was laid on his heart, while with uplifted eyes he seemed to implore a blessing from Heaven on the generous friend who had enabled him to withdraw from the land of their birth,

He was thus engaged, when the sails became suddenly distended; a breeze sprung up, and Clifford again waived his hand with exultation, to bid his benefactress a last adieu. Elinor did the same; and the child, now sustained in his father's arms, attempted to imitate the action. Mrs. Roper was near enough to mark the fond gaze of the parents bent on the smiling pledge of their love, but she had no means of intimating the nature of the errand on which she had come, and saw with grief not easily to be described, the vessel fast receding from her, and all chance of overtaking it lost. She gazed on the forms of those whom she had endeavoured to save, till the projecting line of shore concealed them wholly from her view, before she could give the word to return. The tear of exalted benevolence trespassed on her cheek, and she exclaimed,

“ Unhappy Clifford! friends and foes are destined to be alike fatal to thee.

Had not thy untoward fortune brought thee to me, the calumniators of thy name had been vanquished, and thy peace restored. But I am now the abettor of their malice ; and when they, by themselves, could no longer prevail, I have been made the instrument of consigning thee to inhospitable wilds, a melancholy exile.

CHAP. VI.

————— Were rebels gathering round
 This dauntless slave, by Heaven's ! his voice alone,
 And not his sword, would fight their battles.—
 ROCHER.

ON every side enquiries were multiplied by Lord Erpingham, in the hope of discovering the retreat of Mariana. Edmund and Ferdinand went in quest of her to all the villages in the vicinity of the metropolis, but without being able to obtain any clue to her retreat.

A week had thus been consumed, when Nicholas Bray, who had been put in requisition on this occasion, found himself at Barnet. Darkness was coming on, and he was reluctant either to go

further or to return to the metropolis that night, and he therefore demanded if he could be accommodated. He was answered, that he could have no bed there.

“ Why then litter down a few clean rushes, put the lattice close, and keep up a good roaring fire, and I will edify you and your family, by showing how to sleep through a night without a bed.”

“ I cannot pleasure you, my master,” said the landlord ; “ for even this room will have two inmates.”

“ You expect two fellows to stretch their shanks here, do you ?”

“ Yes, my master.”

“ But you see it is dark ; they will not come now.”

“ They are already here.”

“ And why, then, have they not shewn themselves.”

“ Expecting you to go, they cared not to enter while you rested here.”

“ They may come in. Tell them I am not proud ; and so they do not take all the rushes, I have no objection to their sleeping here ; provided they take good care not to snore louder than may become persons of gentle condition.”

“ But I tell you, they care not for strange company.”

“ Well, if they care not for it, I suppose they heed nothing about it.”

“ But they would rather have thy room.”

“ They shall be right welcome to my room to-morrow, so they will but let me have your room to-night. Bestir thyself, my host, and bring salt and radishes straight to flavour thy nappy ; and for those who sojourn here, bid them be merry, and tell them their worships shall be free to drink, in my name, a flaggon of thy best ale this night, if their worships can pay the charge of the same, or you, being no prudent man, are willing to trust them with it in the morning.”

“ They will not be so sported with, and you are likely to rue offending, for one of them is of quality.”

“ Is he, by the Virgin? Oh then we shall do together, for I am of the quality myself; so tell them the fool of the late lord cardinal, Nicholas Bray, gentleman, kisses their hands, and begs them not to be strange.”

“ I shall do your bidding,” said the host; “ but if they give you entertainment of the sort you covet not, never carp at me for the same.”

“ Away, knave; thy vulgarity shocks me. Not to know that a fool is good company, proves thee a clod well enough in thy place perchance, like the bung in thine ale cask, but valueless for conversation or counsel.”

The host retired somewhat disconcerted by the pertinacity of Bray, and two ragged, ruffianly men made their appearance. Bray had expected guests of a superior order. He was surprised,

but not embarrassed at their aspect, and accosted them with his usual flippancy.

“Gentles, you are right welcome: Mine host said one of you was of the quality, and I doubt not you are both nobles of a marvellously ancient and singularly numerous order.”

“Spare your jibes,” cried one of the strangers, “I am not of the common sort, but the wearer of a title.”

“I am glad you have something to wear besides that tattered doublet, which, to say truth, is well-fashioned to give thy titled carcase the benefit of bleaching, beyond what the common sort would desire. But may I ask what is this same title? Am I speaking to the new *Lord Clerkenwell*, for the late one, I heard, died suddenly at Tyburn?—(I judge the air of that neighbourhood bad, from the number of deaths which there occur;)—or are you of the illustrious family of the *Shoreditches*?”

“ I am none of these whipsters who can shoot at a mark on a holiday, but not at a man on the field of battle. I am an earl.”

“ Earl of what ?”

“ Of Poverty.”

“ I should have thought you might have been king of that realm, from the unlimited command you appear to have of its ragged treasures.”

“ Hold that tongue of thine, or these saucy scoffings, seeing you have not now your cock’s comb on your head, which every true fool wears, may chance to get you that nose hammered flatter than it is.”

“ Thy aid is not wanted to bring perfection to my countenance ; and for the feature you have mentioned, it already lies quietly down like a dame’s lap dog before the fire, wherefore my lord cardinal used to say, ‘ Nicholas, that head of thine is *Socratic* ;’ ‘ yea,’ would I there-

upon reply, ‘and being Socratic, I can fit the rim of my cup close to my face, and philosopher-like, swallow my sack without flinching, whilst your reverence, by reason of your nasal protuberance, must give way when you drink, and turn up your nose at the liquor you love.’”

“Be not put in fume with the varlet,” cried the earl’s companion, “but borrow his jacket, and turn him forth.”

“Rather let us keep him, for much I suspect he is a spy. Whom seek you, sirrah?”

“So please your gentleness, I seek a young wanderer of the she sex, some time since a nun. It is only a woman that has led my unsuspecting innocence astray.”

“And what want you with her, I would know?”

“Even to conduct her to her friends, and — the tale is too long for telling — to give her to one who has strangely discovered that he is her father.”

“And who is he?”

“ O he cannot boast of being an earl, like you ; but he is something, notwithstanding, and is called Lord Erpingham.”

The Earl of Poverty and his companion looked at each other with surprise.

“ Lord Erpingham, said you ?” demanded the earl. “ And is it his daughter that, in the dress of a nun, passed this way ?”

“ I know not that, but if it be so, I am much rejoiced. If you have seen, direct me to her, and all that this house can afford shall be yours, to eat, to drink, and to wear ; and, moreover, angels shall chink in your pence-deserted pockets.”

“ Nay, if she be daughter to Lord Erpingham, we will have good ransom.”

“ Ransom !—Good pay you shall have ; but where is she ?”

“ She is on towards Yorkshire, where, to be brief and plain, a band of right gallant hearts now take the field. They desired to have lord Erpingham for their leader, but when I attended him to make

known their wishes, notwithstanding all men supposed him most staunch to the true church, I could hardly get speech with him. This having reported, I was sent back on a new mission, when he refused me entrance at his porch, and nothing would hear of what I had to tell."

"Truly that was hard, but perchance he did not know your quality."

"He did know it."

"Then hie to him now; take his daughter with you, and I will answer for it, you shall find no difficulty in gaining an audience."

"That may not be; for I have heard a rumour has gone forth, that the rising has already taken place, and if so, I am too noted to escape, should I be seen in London."

"Nay, if you go now in the darkness, you may return by the morning."

"But he will not admit me."

"Then Timothy Skelton, the son of the old laureat, will."

“ And where is he ? ”

“ He keeps the Bell at the lane end, by which you go from Fickett’s Fields to Drury-house, the way passengers take to escape the pits and stagnant water in the Strand.”

“ What ! ” cried the Earl’s companion, “ is the son of the poet an innkeeper ? ”

“ I have told truth. Old Tom impudently scoffed about my Lord Cardinal by reason, as he said that, being the son of a butcher, his genealogy was greasy ; on the which I replied, that a fat sorrow (such as my lord’s was then) a man might bear with fortitude. This Master Tim understands now.”

“ Is he poor ? ”

“ If he is not, he soon will be, for the doddy-pate has agreed to pay in rent by the year no less than seventeen shillings and eight-pence, (taking it on lease,) though the house has but eight rooms besides the kitchen, a skittle-ground and an orchard, with a meadow for bull-baiting.”

“ But what good shall follow from our journeying to the Bell to-night, if Lord Erpingham will not hold communication with me ?”

“ Because even though he were in his bed I dare call him up, and can pass between you with messages, which, respecting this damsel, I know he will be right glad to receive and to reward.”

“ If he will now attend to our suit and aid our cause with his presence and advice, he shall soon regain his daughter.”

“ But how shall I know that this is the very female I seek.”

“ Marry, I hold it to be clear enough, as you look for a nun. She would not tell her name, wherefore, thinking that might chance, which now comes to pass, that she would be sought for by some man of importance, we detained her.”

“ From what convent does she come ?”

“ She said from St. Helen’s, which the King, still adding to his tyrannies, has now suppressed.”

“ O then there can be no more doubt ; if she comes from St. Helen’s. So please your Earlship, let us to horse. I thought not of further journeying to-day, but now hence with me to Fickett’s Fields, and I will negotiate for you.”

“ Do you mean us fairly ?”

“ Truly do I, my good Lord Poverty. If you have still a doubt, propose any oath your pennyless wisdom can fashion, and I will take it.”

“ Attempt to deceive, and, mark me, —I speak at once to the point,—look to have a dagger in thy throat.”

“ Your Lordship speaks to the point with a vengeance.”

“ If you deal foully with us, hope not for life.”

“ If I were roguishly inclined, after what you have said, compassion for mankind in general would make me true to you ; for what could the poor world do if I were gone ?”

“Tush! remember to be false to us is to be a traitor to religion and liberty, for which, if you be a true man, you are prepared to fight and die.”

“Why as to dying for liberty, though it be a very fine thing to talk about, I must confess it is not much to my taste; for I have an awkward suspicion that when I am dead, the finest liberty in the world would not be worth a penny to me, and as aforesaid, I know not how the world could wag without me.”

“Why there were fools before you were born.”

“Yes, and the race will not be wholly extinct after I am dead, if any of the present company chance to survive me. Still I would not willingly leave mankind in worse hands, and therefore content in all cases to keep my life out of jeopardy, your Worship shall have nothing to dread from my treachery.”

“Then we will to London straight, and with speed.”

“ In this your Worship’s wisdom is most apparent, for being at the Bell, I dare promise you an omelet for your suppers.”

“ I fear you promise too largely, for Tim’s cookery shall be over, and he in bed ere we get there, as we cannot arrive till nine of the clock.”

“ That matters not, for I have been a great man at the Bell ever since the sign which stands before the door was first set up by old Billy Sutton, who now, by reason the rent of the Bell was too chargeable, has gone to the Axe at Aldgate-without ; and for Tim, I have known him as long as I have known his father’s verses.”

“ That may be,” said the Earl, “ and yet he may not choose to bestir him self for thee, at so late an hour.”

“ Told I not, that in a case like this I shall not scruple to call Lord Erpingham from his pillow, and after that, need I say, I fear not to disturb a tapster,

He who would pay seventeen and eightpence by the year for his rent alone, must tend his customers late and early; so think not that I, being as I am, run risk of meeting rebuff from that poor, lanky, dangling devil of a boy, Tim Skelton."

Attracted by the hope of making a better report to their brother-insurgents than they had as yet, been enabled to prepare, respecting the intentions of Lord Erpingham, the Earl of Poverty and his companion mounted two shabbily caparisoned mules, and, with Nick Bray, took the road to London.

Arriving at Fickett's Fields, the jester found no difficulty in making good all he had promised with respect to Tim Skelton. But though anxious to accommodate his guests, Tim was somewhat reserved and thoughtful in his manner. Bray, who was in high spirits, from contemplating the important service he be-

lieved he was about to perform and its probable reward, remarked on this ; —

“ Why, Tim, thou art trying to throw thought into that unfried pancake-face of thine. Give over thy labour. Never think of breeding an ox in a rabbit-hutch, or of growing an oak where the moss springs on thy thatch. Now reflection, in respect of its nobleness, may be likened to an oak, and, therefore, it cannot flourish on the dull ugly mask which thy poor empty skull is doomed to wear.”

“ I thought not to see you in merry mood, at this time,” said Tim.

“ What ! dost think I came to condole with thee on the scantiness of thy purse, which begins to grow on thy scantiness of brain ? Not so, man—I will not twit thee for thy blunder. True it is, that thou hast made a marvellously foolish pact in taking the Bell as thou hast, when I dare avouch thou mightest have rented *The Shunamites*, where bishops should be thy

worst guests, for a like rent, and when thou mightest have had the *Axe at Aldgate* for fourteen and nine-pence by the year."

" I think not of the rent that —"

" Think not of the rent ! then thou art mad ; so hang thyself to-night, and I will take care that no coroner shall burn thee for the same. Why, man, two centuries past, all Holborn paid not thy rent five times over. Was not the charge of a tenement for my Lord Bishop of Ely but twenty-two shillings and four-pence? yet thou, one of the common sort, must give seventeen shillings and eight-pence for this grim-looking Bell. After this, the bookseller who offered two pounds thirteen shillings and four-pence for a house in Paternoster-Row, which is in the city, ought not to be accounted lunatic."

" Your speech gives me much pleasure, since it tells me what indeed I hoped from the first, and I will say it,

was convinced must be the fact, that all is right, and that this matter, as to my Lord Erpingham, will not end tragically, by bringing his head to the block."

"Block! head!" exclaimed Bray: "what talk you about? To bring a block to that head of thine would be like carrying water to the Thames. What dost stare at?"

"Because you seem as if you had forgotten that Lord Erpingham is arrested for high treason, and has been carried to the Tower this afternoon."

"To the Tower! Lord Erpingham carried to the Tower, say you?"

"It is most true. Had you been four hours sooner you would have met the halberdiers."

The glee of Bray was suddenly changed into sorrow. From what he considered his good fortune, he had been much disposed to be merry, but now he was affected in a very different manner, while, leaving the Bell, he re-

paired to the house of Lord Erpingham, where, as Timothy Skelton informed him, Master Edmund was still supposed to remain.

CHAP. VII.

Cham. No, I'll none of it: I pr'ythee keep that for the hangman; for I know thou worship'st Saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

Gads. What talk'st thou to me of the hangman?

SHAKESPEARE.

THOUGH British liberty has been the poets' darling song through many ages, and though patriots of the present day talk with rapture of that state of freedom supposed to have been enjoyed in the "good old times," before those innovations on the constitution had taken place, which furnish favorite topics to modern declaimers, but few of the blessings of a liberal constitution were tasted by Englishmen at the period identified

with this narrative ; and he who looked for security from innocence found in many melancholy and memorable instances, that he was under a fatal delusion.

The crime with which Lord Erpingham was charged, was that of denying the supremacy of the King. Of this he had been suspected before the banquet at Ely House, which he had been solicited to attend. His exemplary conduct had failed to disarm malice. It was thought right by those about the King to send an agent, who, describing himself to come from the sovereign, to ask, in confidence, for counsel, might learn the peer's real sentiments. His dutiful avowal of the opinions he entertained was considered to afford excellent evidence on which to convict of high treason.

But it will be remembered that the Earl of Poverty had intruded upon Lord Erpingham on that same night. His

shabby appearance and suspicious manner had attracted the notice of the person sent from the Court to entrap his Lordship. The malcontent had since been recognized as the fisherman who assumed the title of Earl of Poverty, and his presence in Fickett's Fields was supposed to prove a connection between Lord Erpingham and the Yorkshire rebels, who, after several risings of small importance, had at length concentrated their strength, for the purpose of marching to London, to demand the redress of certain grievances, and were already set out on what they called "*The Holy Pilgrimage.*"

Such were the circumstances under which Lord Erpingham had been made a state-prisoner, and Edmund, in the midst of his affliction on account of Mariana, had now to fear that his most valued friend would shortly be doomed to perish on a scaffold.

He was alone; for Ferdinand, as a

last hope, had taken the resolution of making enquiries, at the port where he had landed, if Mariana had attempted returning to Spain. He had left London on the preceding day. Uncertain how to act, Edmund was distracted with thoughts opposed to each other, but all alike in one respect, inasmuch as they were all painful. It was misery to remain inactive while ignorant of the fate of Mariana, yet exertion had hitherto proved useless; and it was painful to pass to any considerable distance, while Lord Erpingham was in his present situation, though he could not flatter himself that remaining near his prison would serve him.

While occupied with these reflections, he saw the jester enter. He remembered the important service which Bray had rendered him, but the recollection was torture, as with it came the thought that his liberation had proved the source of new suffering.

“ Your services,” said he, “ are gratefully but not joyfully remembered. Without your aid, I should have perished where William de Broke breathed his last, instead of surviving to experience the woe which has now come over me.”

“ Verily, Master Edmund, I begin to think myself a kind of bad omen, or a sort of Jonah who evermore gets the ship he sails in, somehow or other, into a storm. My Lord Cardinal had Tommy Cavendish long enough without taking harm, but soon after I became his fool, his reverence met with his downfall. The stews in Southwark have flourished for ages, but now since I was jester there, they have been put down by sound of trumpet ; and lastly, my Lord Erpingham, so long beloved and admired by all manner of men, since I came to do him service, is clapped in the tower.”

“ It is sad,” Edmund remarked, “ but no reproach to you.”

“ True, it is no reproach to me, but it

is ruin to me. I am considered a fool of foul weather. Master Richard Slash, the chirurgeon, cut off a man's leg the other day, who straight catches the plague and dies. Wherefore Master Richard died himself, because his patient did, from sheer fear that people would say he knew not how to keep a man alive. I shall die from fear also; for if none that I serve can live, how can I continue to hope for a livelihood?"

"But tell me, have your new enquiries been as unfortunate as your former ones?"

"I have no courage to answer. Yet I came to Fickett's fields brimful of joy, because I had at last succeeded in learning good tidings of the Lady Mariana."

"What — what of her?" demanded Edmund eagerly.

Bray proceeded to describe the company into which he had fallen, and the message with which he had been charged. Edmund was not a little dis-

turbed, to find that the Earl of Poverty had been brought into the neighbourhood of Lord Erpingham at this critical moment. The proposition of the rebels he would have spurned with disdain, as he knew Lord Erpingham would ; but he feared to exasperate men who had Mariana in their power. It struck him, that the first thing to be done was to get the pretended Earl and his companion to retreat, before they could be recognized. He therefore instructed Bray to desire them to take their departure immediately, at the same time promising that he (Lord Erpingham being away) would follow and largely requite their services, if they would bring him to the lady whom they had represented to be in their custody.

But when Bray returned to the Bell with this message, he found that his late companions had already taken to flight. The arrest of Lord Erpingham, though it did not prove him hostile to their

cause, most clearly established that it was in vain to look for his assistance. This point settled, they had no anxiety on any subject in which he might feel personally interested; and therefore they judged it prudent to decamp at once, since they were not quite certain that to be seen with one looked upon as a part of his Lordship's household was perfectly compatible with their safety. At all events, it was clear that danger might grow out of delay, and they had no longer any object to gain by staying. More was not necessary to induce them at once, to quit Fickett's Fields with all convenient expedition.

Edmund felt much embarrassed by the situation in which he found himself; but anxiety to release Mariana from the rude hands which he had been given to understand detained her, prevailed over every other consideration; and he resolved on following the Earl of Poverty, to claim the fugitive as the daughter of Lord Erpingham.

But with all the speed he could exert, he failed to overtake the parties with whom he wished to negotiate. He could not endure the thought of returning without obtaining certain information of Mariana, and still pursued the route which he supposed them to have taken, accompanied by Bray, who boldly maintained, as they advanced, that the Earl of Poverty could not be far before them, and he, at last, most confidently appealed to Edmund if he had not been right all along, when, on arriving at Doncaster, he recognized the features and tatters of that very important personage.

The insurrection, which had brought this man into notice, and given him the ridiculous title which he owned, had originated with a monk named David Mackarell, who, to ingratiate himself with the vulgar multitude, of whose services he proposed to avail himself, had assumed the appellation of *Captain Cobler*. He had been at the head of one of the

monasteries which Henry had dissolved. Their suppression injured many of the poor who depended on them for support, and Mackarel not only convinced them that that measure was unjust towards them, but he had the address to make many believe it could not fail to prove a source of permanent calamity to the nation at large. Hence the tumultuous rising, and the threatening advance towards London, which was called *Pilgrimage of Grace*. That the religious houses should be promptly re-established was one of their first demands. But they most vehemently complained of that fearful infringement of the British constitution, which had taken away the right of sanctuary, by means of which, in what were then called "the good old times of our ancestors," murderers and other criminals might claim a refuge in certain places, and for a season, set the officers of justice at defiance. There was still one other point which they were most earnestly fixed to

carry, which many, who did not join the insurgents, and indeed the majority of the nation, were much inclined to favour : this was to prevail on the King to declare legitimate that extremely popular princess, for such she was at the time of this insurrection, his eldest daughter, since distinguished by the odious title of “ bloody Queen Mary.”

Edmund gazed with astonishment on the vast multitudes collected together for the purpose of advancing to the capital. He found them provided with tents, and irregularly armed. Large banners, on which a crucifix appeared, were prepared to be carried before them. In these ensigns, the five wounds of the Redeemer, with the word Jesus, were made particularly conspicuous ; and it was the constant occupation of the ecclesiastics, who mingled with the crowd in great numbers, to represent that they ought to be kept constantly in view, with the feeling that it would be sacrilegious ingrati-

tude to him who had suffered for them, not to advance in the cause of the rights of his church. Still more to impress this on their minds, a small copy of the banner was worn on the sleeve of each pilgrim; and this distinction was the only feature of uniformity to be remarked in the rabble host, which comprehended all the varieties of attire, as it did almost all the varieties of calling and condition, which were at that time known in England.

The arrival of two strangers well mounted was a circumstance of some moment at this period. It was necessary to ascertain that the parties were not spies; but, in any case, the insurgents calculated on strengthening their cavalry with the horses, if not with the men. With all necessary gravity, the Earl of Poverty approached the new comers, and the voice of one of them, reproving him for running away after supper without saying "Good even," at once enabled

him to distinguish his late companion, Nicholas Bray.

“ Truly, Mr. Fisherman, I cry you mercy, my Lord Poverty I mean ; it seemeth to me you might as well have tarried where you supped on Friday night, till I might return with such tidings as I had to bring. For though, thanks to my bounty, your bowels were not scantily provided for on that occasion, I might have put wealth in your purse, which would have served for another repast or so.”

“ It may be that you tell me no lie. I say not that it is so ; but when I found that the great lord I wished to be near had been arrested, I judged it right to waste no time on forms, lest I should get sent another way. Thou understandest.”

“ I believe I do. You say you were afraid of being sent another road, from which I judge that you, though but the fresh cast spawn of the sea, have made out that Tyburn lies away from the tower.”

“ Where so much depended on one,

that one was bound to look to his own safety."

"You considered it your duty to fly from the gallows. By the mass, you have a quick sense of right and wrong, and for your taste, which leads you to quit your meat to escape a halter, I hold it to be excellent. But now you must see, since we have followed you thus far, that no treachery was intended."

"Nevertheless, there might be much danger. A title like mine brings much peril."

"That is most true. He must be a bold man or a fool, who willingly bears the name of poverty. The proverb tells that 'poverty is no sin,' but that must be no truth, since all mankind are leagued against it, in order to punish those who are guilty of being poor. The very names heretofore given to those who toiled in want, begin to signify crime, and now we can scarcely talk of a *rascal*,

a *knave*, or a *vilain*, without being supposed to speak of a rogue."

"Have done with trifling," said Edmund, "and let us speak of that which has brought us into these parts. I am advised," he continued, addressing himself to the Earl of Poverty, "that you have detained a lady respecting whom enquiry has been made."

"We have detained her, but of this you may be sure that from persons of our note and appearance," and here the Earl of Poverty adjusted his tatters with an air of dignity intended to inspire the most profound respect ; — "here she will have to deal with gentles, and when we terminate our *pilgrimage of grace* in London, we shall restore the convent from which she has been dislodged, and give her back to her late abode."

"Give her back !" echoed Edmund, "Can you contemplate an act so foul ? Can you return one so lovely and so

young to the detected abominations of the convent, to which, in evil hour, she was consigned?"

"How now!" cried the Earl. "What manner of man art thou? Of what dost thou talk?"

"You must surely have heard of the frightful enormities proved to have taken place within the walls of the convent, from which she, respecting whom we have conversed, has been liberated."

"Nay, since thus you speak, you cannot be the friend I took you for. You are, perhaps, one of the false swearing visitors, hired by the King's council to set afloat such tales as may furnish excuse for seizing the goods of convents."

"I have spoken but truth, and the maid you have seen can bear witness to what I have said."

"She," returned the Earl of Poverty, "complains not, and by good hap she comes this way, even now, to answer for herself."

With what eagerness did Edmund turn to gaze once more on the fondly beloved being he expected to see! — His disappointment was great, when he found that the nun whom he had so anxiously pursued was not Mariana. He faintly demanded,

“Is this — is this the nun of whom you told me?”

“It is. Now ask her if she had cause to complain?”

“Of her I know nothing. This is not the fugitive I sought.”

“But she is a nun, and can resolve you in aught that concerns the suppression of her convent.”

“From her I seek no information. Since it is thus, since the Lady Mariana is not here, I shall not prolong my stay.”

“But,” replied the Earl of Poverty, “not for the price of a new doublet, dare I suffer you to depart.”

“Do you make me a prisoner?”

“I shall take you to our captain. He

will perhaps make you one, but I should betray my high trust if I failed to conduct you to him, together with your companion, master fool."

"The foul fiend seize your earldom," cried Bray; "your lordship seems to have got to your old trade again. Seizing on us in this marvellously ungallant manner, it is quite clear that with you *all's fish that comes to net.*"

"I" said the Earl, "must obey my captain."

"Captain Cobler you mean, that is Father David—David Mackarell. Truly your captain seems well named for you. No doubt your lordship, being a fishing man, will stick close to a *Mackarel.*"

"You would do no unwise thing, to spare this sauce."

"You shall have no more *fish sauce.*"

"You will perhaps have a halter about your neck."

"If that is the case, by the mass, I have made a *pretty kettle of fish.*"

“ Hold your peace, and follow me.”

“ Yes,” your Earlship, “ but I flatter myself, your lordship will not take it amiss, if I say, since you talk about hanging a poor flat fish like me, that I hope you will have *other fish to fry*.”

CHAP. VIII.

You have a holy father
A graceful gentleman ; against whose person,
So sacred as it is, I have done sin.

SHAKESPEARE.

FERDINAND visited Dover, and made enquiries of every one, from whom he could hope to obtain the least information, of those who had passed through. The answers which he received, were any thing but such as he was anxious to hear. He proceeded to other parts of the coast, but met with no better success ; and, at length overwhelmed with disappointment and regret, he again took the road to the metropolis. He frequently deviated from the direct track, in the wild hope of meeting with the object of his anxious pursuit, and thus wasted several days in his progress.

He was within a few miles of London

when the mortification he had sustained, combined with the fatigue he had undergone, so affected his health that he was unable to complete his journey. A raging fever seized on him, he became delirious, and death for a time appeared inevitable.

When the crisis was past and he had become convalescent, he was impatient to return to London, to terminate the alarm which he feared his absence would cause Lord Erpingham to experience. He was apprehensive that his lordship would be mocked with the hope that he had succeeded in discovering the retreat of Mariana. As soon as he could mount his horse, he resolved to proceed to the metropolis. He accordingly left the inn at Blackheath, where he had rested, but soon found that the exercise of riding was more than he could bear. He reluctantly made up his mind to return, but his exhaustion was so great, that before he could accomplish this he

fell from his horse in a state of insensibility.

On reviving, he found himself in a private house. He had sustained little injury from his fall, and was desirous of returning thanks for the kind attention he had received, and of retiring. This, however, was not permitted, and he was almost compelled to remain till the next day, when he prepared to depart, with many expressions of gratitude.

"We separate not so abruptly," said the person whose hospitality had been so seasonably interposed in his behalf. "You seem surprised at the peremptory tone in which I speak, but a greater surprise awaits you."

"Speak on. After the violent shocks which I have lately sustained, it is no common disclosure that can move me."

"Nor is it one of common interest that I have to make. You had a niece whom you fondly loved?"

"I thought so."

"Nay, of that you must be certain."

"Not so, madam. But make no pause, — ask no questions but answer in one word — Speak you of Mariana?"

"Yes."

"What of her? Where is she? Is she alive?"

"She lives and is in safety."

"Where? Tell me, that I may fly to her."

"That shall not be necessary. Yet a moment, and she will fly to you."

"Is she beneath this roof?"

"She is."

"Can it be possible! O joy unutterable! And yet one thought comes over me."

"Let none be entertained which can disturb your peace. Saved by a happy accident from the basest outrage, chance conducted her to this place, to the town of Greenwich; and one most injured most unfortunate himself, was the means of introducing her to me."

“ Amazement ! And I, — how came I here ? ”

“ That you shall know immediately. ”

“ But where is Mariana ? ”

“ This moment restores her to your love. ”

Whilst speaking she opened a door, and Mariana presented herself. She bounded forward with uncontrollable transport, and sunk in the arms of Ferdinand, exclaiming, —

“ Am I, am I so blest as to know once more the embrace of an uncle ! ”

Ferdinand heard not her words, and could only utter from the fullness of his heart, —

“ My dearest sister ! ”

The word sister commanded the attention of Mariana, and when it was repeated she could not refrain from saying : —

“ I fear that the joy of this moment has almost overpowered your mind. You have called me sister ! ”

“ And such you are. Oh ! I have much

to tell. But not to enter into the details now, when to say the truth, I am ill prepared for lengthened narrative, let it suffice to say, that a wonderful discovery has taken place since we parted, which has established that I am that for which I was often taken, — your brother : and that mine will be the delightful task of speedily restoring you to a father's arms."

" Indeed ! — Is this possible ? Forgive me when I ask it, but I fear your reason wanders."

" No, Mariana, reason is now called home to my brain, and unlooked for peace to my heart. You have a father, who has long mourned for his absent offspring ; and that father is no other than the peer whose praises you have often heard from Edmund, — is no other than Lord Erpingham."

The grateful astonishment of brother and sister at thus unexpectedly meeting, and under circumstances so extraordi-

nary it would be worse than useless to dilate upon, but the accident which brought them together ought not to be passed over.

As Mariana was by no means certain that Ferdinand remained in England, she knew not where to seek him, nor could Mrs. Roper suggest any course which seemed likely to give her the desired information. She therefore entreated Mariana to consider herself at home, in her house, till some fortunate chance should enable her to rejoin her only relation. It was not till she had been resident at Greenwich some time, that it occurred to her Lord Erpingham might possibly know what had been the intentions of Ferdinand. His lordship, the friend of her father, had been in the habit of visiting Mrs. Roper, and she was somewhat surprised that of late he had omitted to do so. The perfect seclusion in which she lived had precluded her from hearing of his arrest, and she determined to wait

on him at Fickett's-fields. For this purpose she was leaving Greenwich, accompanied by Mariana, when their way was impeded by a crowd of persons assembled round a horseman, who had fallen. Mariana saw the face of Ferdinand as he was lifted from the ground, and instantly recognised her supposed uncle. Upon this Mrs. Roper directed that he should be conveyed to her house, and thus brought about the present meeting.

Indescribable joy took possession of the heart of Mariana, when she heard from the lips of Ferdinand those events which had recently occurred, and especially when she learned that the cause of that restlessness and gloom, which she had never ceased to lament, was removed. The expressions which Ferdinand had sometimes used, the language of the letter which she had received from him in the convent, were now explained ; and equal exultation and gratitude grew on the reflection that she was no longer

doomed to sigh that she might gaze on him no more, nor tremble for the unknown evil, mysteriously hanging over him.

Though Mariana had taken the vows of a nun, from these she was now liberated by the royal edict, which put down the establishment, to which she had belonged. Exclusive of this circumstance, the King, in the character of supreme head of the church, had taken care that too much importance should not be attached to such vows. As one step towards the complete suppression of monastic establishments, he had determined on throwing open the doors to all their inmates, who were not more than four and twenty years of age. This measure, as it relieved persons thus circumstanced from all apprehension for the present, induced many to return to the world with little concern about the future. Consciences, in other respects very tender, reconciled themselves, with

little difficulty, to the sanction thus given to following their own inclinations.

The exultation of Ferdinand at having regained his sister, no language can depict. Blessed, while he witnessed the joy which now animated her countenance, and still more so, in anticipating that which was yet to come, when he should restore her to a fondly expectant father's arms.

Impatient for this consummation, it was determined, that on the succeeding day, he should perform the grateful task of conducting Mariana to Lord Erpingham. Mrs. Roper, anxious to witness a scene so rich in felicity, proposed to accompany them, and shortly after noon on the morrow, they set forward from Greenwich.

As they approached the bridge, Mrs. Roper looked with a sigh at the pole on which the head of her father had been elevated. It was now surmounted by that of a more recent victim. She turned from

the ghastly object, with the exclamation — “God only knows whose head may next take thy place!”

She counselled Ferdinand to go forward and prepare Lord Erpingham for the coming of Mariana. Ferdinand felt the importance of this hint, and acted upon it immediately. When he entered Fleet-street, he was considerably in advance, but here he was stopped by the pressure of an immense multitude, and the active exertions of officers, who were endeavouring to keep the road clear for a procession, which was forthwith expected to pass.

In consequence of his being thus impeded, he was soon rejoined by Mariana and her conductress. They came up just as the looked-for procession was seen. Mrs. Roper turned pale, Ferdinand remarked it, and enquired the cause of her being thus affected.

“Alas!” said she, “it reminds me of the mournful cavalcade it was mine to

behold, on the day when my dear and virtuous father received his doom. All I now see, recalls the eager interest with which the crowd pressed to see the manner in which the axe was carried."

"This, madam, I understand not."

"You shall know, that he who is accused of crimes against the state, and is of some rank in the same, is carried in procession from the Tower to Westminster-hall, for trial. The axe by which if adjudged guilty he shall die, is borne before him by an officer, but with the edge from him, to denote that though accused, till trial shall be had, he is accounted innocent."

"Is such the custom of England?"

"It is. When placed at the bar where he must plead to his indictment, and defend himself as he may, the axe is still kept near him in the manner I have said, but when the verdict shall be given, if the prisoner be pronounced guilty, thereupon, immediately, even in

the court, the edge of the fatal weapon is turned towards the neck, which it is speedily to sever, and so is it carried through the streets, on returning to the Tower."

The procession drew near, and Mrs. Roper perceived that it was indeed one of those spectacles of which she had been speaking.

"I fear," said she, "it will be ours to view such a melancholy sight as I have named. There are the yeomen, with their bills and partisans. Behind, I see more of them, their partisans borne on the shoulder, and with them are the musketeers, armed with the new flangled harquebuzes, which are carried without rests. But now I can distinguish those who approach. He who rides alone, after the first company, is Sir W. Kingston, the constable of the Tower. And see, behind him comes the chamberlain of the Tower; — he bears the fatal axe,

— O God ! the edge is towards the prisoner.”

And her sympathy for the devoted offender, and afflicting recollections, almost overcame her. Her attention was in that moment arrested by the sudden exclamations of Ferdinand, —

“ Saviour of man ! What sight is this ? It cannot be ; — yet is — it is my father ! — it is Lord Erpingham.”

Mrs. Roper looked with apprehension and dismay at the prisoner, who was now passing them, and saw that it was indeed the friend of her father, — and the same Lord Erpingham, whom even in that moment she had hoped to see embracing his children.

Lord Erpingham appeared perfectly tranquil and collected. His eyes were frequently raised towards Heaven, with an expression of countenance that told he was engaged in preparing for that awful change to which he was sentenced

by the decision just pronounced. He had nearly passed, when the confusion occasioned in the crowd by the emotion of Ferdinand, attracted his attention. It was then that he perceived his son, and by his side the weeping Mariana. The heart of the father was moved; he doubted not that he beheld his child, — his anxiously sought daughter; and thinking only of her, he turned towards the place where she stood. It was supposed by the guards he meditated escape, and a sudden forward movement of those who followed, prevented him from approaching Mariana. Vainly did he attempt to explain. The pressure of those who had come forward, and of those who being in advance had retraced their steps to support their comrades, compelled the populace to move in all directions; and Ferdinand, his sister, and their friend, carried away by the all-potent current, saw no more of Lord Erping-

ham, who, preceded by the axe, with the edge towards his person, was carried, with a quicker pace than had been previously thought fitting an occasion of such solemnity, towards the Tower.

CHAP. IX.

For stranger seas we're bound,
Which wash the savage shore,
Where wild winds sweep, in chorus deep,
To swell the billows frantic roar.

HIGH-WAYS AND BY-WAYS.

“THE die is cast,” said Clifford, as the vessel in which he had embarked bound-
ed before the favouring gale. “Already
the land of our birth is but dimly seen
in the distance. Yet a few moments,
and we shall have looked on it for the
last time. Does no misgiving come
over you? Feels not my Elinor, that she
has made too large a sacrifice, in giving
up an affectionate parent, gay friends,
and splendid fortune, for him who is now
her lord?”

“Nay, Clifford, doubt me not. As we advance, a wild, indefinite, unbounded hope, vast as the interminable ocean in which we are launched, comes to me more sweet than the most joyous certainty which ever was mine.”

“This is well, thy gallant courage gives me new energy. We shall yet see happy days, and little regret the shores to which we now bid adieu for ever.”

“In good truth, Master Howard,” (that was the name which Clifford had assumed,) said the master, “there is small reason to sorrow for quitting old England in times like these.”

“At least,” said Clifford, “I have no reason to regret aught that I have left behind in it.”

“And you but feel as many more do. Merry England shall never again be what England was.”

“Virtue and honesty are known no

more, and sacrilegious profanation pervades the whole land."

"Much do I fear you err but little in coming to this conclusion."

"There was no slight proof of what I named, in what occurred the day before we sailed. Heard you what chanced in London, then?"

"I was resident in Kent," was the reply of Clifford, "and had no such recent tidings of what had taken place in the metropolis."

"Marry, sir, you will marvel at the tale; on that day the far-famed and most virtuous Father Egbert—"

"Father Egbert!"

"One of the priests of the Trinity—"

"What! what of him? — nay, why this pause?"

"I cannot choose but pause from surprise to see you moved already. If you are thus stricken at hearing but his name, what shall you be when you know

that this most holy character was taken with his concubine, a nun of Saint Helen, even in the chapel of the convent."

Clifford gazed on the man with unspeakable surprise.

"Why, it seems to take your breath away, goodman Howard," said the master.

"It has, indeed," he at length answered; "but if thy tale be veritable, it shall give me new life."

"Nay, for the truth myself can answer."

"How may that be? Thou couldst not be in the convent to see. This, I judge, is but a rumour."

"Proof was not wanting; and these eyes saw both the monk and his mistress hunted through the streets of London, on signal being given by the visitors, who came from detecting the sanctified Egbert."

"God of the just!" exclaimed Clifford with devotion; "I bow before thy awful

throne, and recognize thy mercy. Look up, my Elinor; if resigned before, be joyful now, for the crimes of my undoer can no longer be concealed, and the world shall yet do justice to my name."

"Said I not so," demanded Elinor, "when you desponded? Confiding in the justice of the Eternal, I looked for this."

"Yes, dearest, thou art a mine of living wealth. Now bounds my heart with rapture springing from my very wrongs, for these have been the test of faithful love, and proved thee the noblest prodigy ever fashioned by Heaven's creating hand."

"Speak you thus to me, Clifford, altered, faded as I am?"

"If suffering has drunk the lustre of thine eyes, it is on me their brightness has been squandered; and if in spite of the glorious fortitude which lifts thee above all woman-kind, tears for my wayward wanderings have given thy cheek a paleness which it was not wont

to wear, shall I not recall thy vanished beauty, and own the splendour of the sacrifice which pity made at the altar of affection?"

"Say, rather, of reason."

"No, Elinor; thy soul was too generously warm to admit reason to its councils. But our woe approaches its termination; joy shall restore the radiance of thine eyes, and brighter roses will flourish on thy cheek."

Night came on, but Clifford was in no haste to seek repose. The degradation of Egbert he regarded as the re-establishment of his own character; he no longer thought of repairing to the new world, but determined to go from Spain to England by the first ship.

With the exultation which glowed in his heart, a feeling of regret was mingled that he had not sooner heard of Egbert's miscarriage.

He questioned the master minutely on

the subject, and the circumstantial statement which he gave left no doubt of its truth. The only drawback on his happiness was the reflection that some weeks must elapse before he could return to England.

He felt assured that Lord Erpingham would now be anxious to atone for the wrong he had formerly done, in believing the calumnies of Egbert. After long indulging this consoling thought he had sunk into tranquil sleep, when he was abruptly disturbed by a loud outcry and a confused noise. Clifford endeavoured to pass to the deck, but was bluntly admonished to keep below by one who, armed with a sword, and supported by others equally well provided, called to him at that moment,—

“He who desires life, let him keep where he now abides.”

“What may this mean?” Clifford demanded, with impatience.

“Mean what it may, it shall not peril

thee or thine, so thou remainest quiet. Offer to come up, and death shall requite thy daring."

"Is it even so? — Then am I already a prisoner?"

"Thy durance will be brief."

Clifford did not think it wise to disregard the counsel he had received: though excited by the sound of fighting, he refrained from springing on the deck, as he had at first prepared to do, not so much on account of the threat held out, as from the embarrassment he felt with respect to the subject of contention, and the impossibility of distinguishing the parties, if he attempted to mingle in the fray.

Silence was soon restored. The groans of men apparently dying had been heard, but these were soon followed by the melancholy sound of something falling into the sea, and it was certain that the torture of the sufferers had been terminated by their being thrown overboard. Clif-

ford was called upon, by his assumed name, to make his appearance on deck. Elinor trembled when she heard this summons, and offered to detain him.

“Release me, Elinor,” he said; “be the danger what it may, I must confront it.”

“But not alone. I will with thee. If murder be intended, we will die together.”

“Come forth, Master Howard,” cried the voice which had been heard before, and which he now recognized as that of a man who had been, like himself, a passenger.”

“I obey,” Clifford replied. Then addressing himself to Elinor, he said, “Remain below; your presence can nothing avail; if there be danger, my speech may avert it. Remain, I entreat.”

She reluctantly abandoned her hold, and he stepped on deck.

“How now?” he exclaimed; “what has chanced?”

“ The ship has changed masters, and he who lately commanded is bait for fishes. It is therefore deemed meet to inform you that if you covet not to join him ; you must yield obedience to those who are now masters.”

“ And who are they ?”

“ Brave and determined spirits, who will suffer no vain terrors or foolish qualms to oppose their perfect success.”

“ By that, I guess, I am to learn that, met by refractory conduct on my part, no foolish qualm will prevent some brave and determined spirit from putting me to death.”

“ Your capacity is good, and you have not misjudged our meaning.”

Elinor now appeared by his side : Clifford turned to bid her retire, but without heeding his speech, she rushed between him and the spokesman of the armed party, and falling on her knees, implored mercy.

“ His life,” said the passenger, “ is in

his own keeping. If he is wise, your prayer is needless; if foolish, it will prove useless."

"And may I ask your present purpose?" said Clifford.

"You shall know so much of it as imports you. The ship is no longer on her way to Spain."

"And whither goes she, then?"

"That you may know hereafter. Let it suffice that you shall be landed on the English coast, so you observe certain conditions."

"Name them."

"The first that you keep below, save when permission is given to appear on deck; and the second, that should it be our hap to be boarded on the way, you observe silence."

"I have seen nothing of which I can report."

"If you delay to promise that which is required, you shall have no oppor-

tunity to tell tales. When we have set you at large, report what you list ; we now but claim your promise of strict silence for a brief season. This refused, it only remains to silence you for ever.—Your answer ?”

“ Though I shrink not from the risk of life in a fair cause, I covet not distinction by vainly sacrificing it. Disclaiming all participation in the works of blood ye have done, or may hereafter do, I yield assent.”

This answer appeared to give satisfaction. Clifford was ordered below, and both he and Elinor heard the new masters of the ship engaged in earnest debate. Sometimes the name of Howard was uttered with warmth, and, as they thought, with indignation ; but of the latter they were not certain. It was, however, at all events, clear that their fate was undecided, and that the masters of it had still doubts whether their own security would

not be best consulted by putting those who had become their prisoners to the sword.

The weather, which had hitherto been fair, became stormy; and for several days they had to contend with a succession of hurricanes. This, though unpleasant, was no unfortunate circumstance for Clifford, as the desperadoes who had thought of depriving him of life, were too busily engaged, contending with the elements, to think much of him.

At length the ship neared land, and Clifford, being called on deck, was informed that he might pass to the shore. It was evening, and he perceived the vessel was riding in a spacious bay. A tall rock surmounted by a castle met his eye, when he looked to the land, and at the foot of the rock he perceived several clusters of dwellings irregularly disposed, but forming altogether a neighbourhood rather considerable in point of extent.

“ You may depart if you list. We

have kept faith with you, and you have had no opportunity of breaking it with us, so neither party has cause to complain. Now you are free to remain with us, or go."

"I shall then claim the privilege of departing straight."

"Be it so," cried the leader. "You are free to act as you list, and to tell what you know, if you are so minded, to all you meet."

"Am I free to go?"

"The boat is ready to land you. All I would say farther is this. Arrived here, we have no further apprehension, and care not who hears of our exploit. But for your own sake you would do well to be cautious how you name it, as, not being thus advertised, you might have been likely to do; for those who will fall in your way will probably be our friends, and we may yet meet again."

"Enough, I understand your threat."

"I threaten not."

“ Then I mistake the purport of your speech.”

“ Again I will try to hit thy comprehension. Fearing nothing that you may say or do, in no unkind mood, I would warn you to keep your tongue under good wholesome check ; for, mistaking us for sea-robbers, you might so describe our doings as to put those who expect us here in fume, and thereby bring yourself once more into jeopardy.”

“ Your counsel, for its goodness, may merit much thanks ; but, truth to tell, I am little likely, so I think, to make mistake as to your quality ; and nothing complaining of your conduct so far as I myself am concerned, I bid you farewell.”

He then assisted Elinor to get into the boat, descended after her, and they were rowed to the shore.

Clifford had no doubt that the vessel had been seized for piratical purposes, and expected to see the men who carried him from the ship, return forthwith.

They, however, landed, and, without troubling themselves to bestow a single word on him, began to climb the rock on which the castle frowned.

To gain a resting-place for the night became the object of Clifford. He saw a small inn, and to this he advanced. The landlord of it met him at the door, but with no very cordial greeting. He, however, entered, and found himself in the midst of from twelve to twenty men. Surprised at this, he would have retired, but was prevented by those nearest the door.

“ No drawing back, friend,” cried one of them. “ If you are no spy, never be alarmed.”

“ I feel no alarm, but wish not to intrude.”

“ Stand not upon fashions here, but tell us at once what you seek at Scarborough ?”

“ If I am now in Scarborough, I seek nothing but the way to London.”

“ And whence came you last ?”

“ From Greenwich.”

“ Oh ! you are from the court then ?
And by what hap did you chance to learn
that the best road from Greenwich to Lon-
don was by the way of Scarborough ?”

“ We came not willingly,” said Elinor.

“ The she - bird begins to squeak.
So then you pretend to have been forced
to come on this errand ?—You pause.
Haply you have not heard me. That
cap comes so low, it makes you deaf.
Off with it straight.”

“ I hear right, well” said Clifford,
eagerly hoping to escape the exposure
with which he was threatened ? but in
one moment his head was rudely un-
covered, to the no small surprise of the
by-standers.

“ Is it so ?” cried the examiner. “ Nay,
then, thou art not the man we suspected.
Thou canst be no spy by profession, but
hast rather been spied upon. In brief,
how came you hither ?”

“ Being embarked for Spain, the ship was carried from the true mariners by others, and I have been unwillingly brought hither.”

“ And is the ship safe arrived ? ”

“ Pass you to the shore, and you shall see her riding in the bay.”

A shout burst from the whole company at this news, most of whom immediately left the room.

“ The gallows and thy neck be ever strangers, for the tidings thou hast brought. Good cheer shall be at thy command this night, happen what may to-morrow. Though thy cropped ears tell honesty is not thy failing, still — ”

“ Give me leave, one moment,” cried Clifford, in a tone which from its firmness commanded attention. “ Believe that it is possible for a man to suffer wrong without meriting disgrace, and I shall satisfy you that I am not the varlet you suppose.”

“ Never heed it. You are not the first

that loved his neighbours goods as his own, if he loved not his neighbour like himself."

"I have suffered through perjury, through the baseness of that now detected villain, Father Egbert, one of the priests of the Trinity."

"How say you? Were the side-flourishes of your skull lopped away on his account, — for aspersing him?"

"No, for telling truth."

"You then are called Clifford?"

"The same."

"Oh! then you are a verier miscreant than I first suspected, or last guessed you to be. It is too dark to hang to-night, but your varlet windpipe will scarcely endure the wear of another day."

"Are you then prepared to abet his cruelty?"

"We know the pious father well. His money has stood us in good stead; and but for the mangling he received

from the mob some week or ten days past, he himself would have been in Scarborough by this. We cannot better show our gratitude to him, than by providing a hempen necklace for you ; so sing canticles all night, that you may be ready to kick the wind in the morning."

CHAP. X.

With ignominy to preserve my breath,
Is worse by infinite degrees than death;
But if I can't my life with honour save,
With honour I'll descend into my grave.

POMFRET.

CLIFFORD believed the termination of his sufferings to be at hand; but when the morning arrived, that prompt execution, which he looked for, did not take place. His situation however, was not, in his own view of it, materially improved by that circumstance, as he was only offered life on terms which he was resolute not to accept.

When the rebellion with which Captain Cobler and the Earl of Poverty were connected broke out, the original rising took place at Scarborough. Though it was the object of the parties

to advance to London, several of the ringleaders, fearing that their plans might be frustrated by a rapid march of the King's forces into Yorkshire, before they should be sufficiently strong to give battle, were desirous of securing a retreat by sea. They therefore considered that if a ship of good size could be secured and kept always ready for their reception, a most important point would be gained. To accomplish this, some of the most daring among them, including several mariners, found their way to London; under various pretences got on board the vessel in which Clifford proposed passing to Spain, and acted the part which has been described.

The monk, who had taken the name of *Captain Cobler*, and Father Egbert, had long been in communication. The latter, alarmed by the actions of the King, never doubted but the establishment over which he presided would one day fall before the rapacity of Henry;

and he therefore took care to dispose of as much of the property belonging to the monastery as he could alienate, without being prematurely exposed to suspicion. Deceived by the obstreperous ravings of an exasperated rabble, who had been employed and fed by those establishments which it was the policy of the King to crush, he was of opinion, that to lead a force to London, in such strength as to compel the monarch to abandon his confiscating policy, would be a task of little risk and difficulty. Under this impression, Egbert scrupled not in conjunction with Captain Cobler, to advance considerable sums in aid of the means which the other parties to the plot had at their disposal; and this being known to the rebels, he was as much extolled in Yorkshire, as he was execrated in London.

And with those feelings of attachment and approbation, which his readiness to embark in the same cause with them, and

his liberal support of that cause had inspired, their first impression was, that to hang Clifford for his former enmity to their patron, would be an acceptable mark of respect to him, and a singularly patriotic action in itself.

But when repose had calmed their spirits, and reflection returned, some reluctance was felt to execute the threat which had been pronounced. They were moved by the affliction of Elinor ; and the unconscious smiles of the infant, not less than the tears of the mother, induced a desire to spare the intended victim. That Clifford had not sought to harm them, but had originally a very different destination in view, was proved by their friends from the ship ; and this favourable circumstance induced them to offer him his life, on condition of his joining them in *the pilgrimage of grace*.

On almost any terms he would have been glad to pass to London, but to go thither as a rebel, was that to which, had

danger been wholly out of the question, he could not reconcile his mind. His exultation in the discovery which vindicated his character, grew mainly out of the reflection that it restored him to the favour of Lord Erpingham. The esteem of one whom he had from infancy revered, putting wholly aside interested considerations, he most highly prized. But here, his future fortunes were concerned. That aid which the Peer would have withheld, and which Clifford would have disdained to seek or to receive, while still pointed at as the degraded perjurer, would now, he had abundant reason for supposing, be rapturously bestowed. But very different would be the case, should he present himself before Lord Erpingham, (supposing this could be done with safety,) stained with the guilt of rebellion. He felt that it would be quite as well for his fame, that the stigma, which he had previously borne, should have re-

mained unrefuted, as that he should now merit the appellation of traitor. He had then but to choose between new shame and death, and he unhesitatingly decided for the latter.

Time was granted that he might reconsider the subject. The enormities of the King, the sufferings of the people, the insults offered to religion, were pressed on his attention ; but he remained inflexible. It was at this juncture that news arrived of the arrest, trial, and condemnation of Lord Erpingham. He rejected the whole statement, as a fabrication ; but such vouchers were speedily produced, that to entertain a doubt on the subject was impossible.

Clifford still refused to fall into the ranks of the rebels. But when intelligence came that his uncle — that his friend — that Lord Erpingham had perished on a scaffold, his rage and his grief knew no bounds, and in the stormy emotion which assailed him, he exclaimed, —

“Nay, if the King turn traitor to himself, and can thus with remorseless tyranny, doom his most loyal subjects to death, it is not for me to think of my fealty more. No heart ever inhabited a human bosom more faithful to duty and to its Sovereign, than that which has died with Lord Erpingham. Since *he* has been immolated, no man is safe; and in such a case, rebellion is virtue. Now tender me your oath, and give me a sword. — I am, I will be yours.”

He was taken at his word, and sworn to be faithful to the conspirators. They considered that in him they had gained no mean acquisition. The name of Lord Erpingham's nephew, they judged of itself important, and they attached some value to the fury by which he was animated, and to the strength which it was obvious he possessed to give some effect to that fury. None doubted, but Egbert himself, when informed of what had been done, would rejoice in the circumstance.

Clifford accompanied a party from Scarborough, to the rebel head-quarters, at Doncaster. He was not a little shocked by the vulgarity of some of the leaders, to whom he was introduced. Where such ignorance and lack of talent were found, he could not but anticipate miscarriage. To reflect on this was now worse than useless, and he endeavoured to dismiss the idea, and to inspire courage, by affecting confidence.

On the day of his arrival, he perceived a man attentively regarding him. Now he crouched and advanced as if resolved to accost him — then he retired as if anxious to avoid, and then again he approached, and at length spoke.

“Pleaseth it your worship, to make pause for some short space. I would not ask such grace, but as an old customer, when your gentility was in the glen-vending line of commerce at Canterbury.”

Clifford now recognized Nick Bray,

and supposing him disposed to repeat his former insolence, he contemptuously replied, —

“Peace fellow, or I shall with little delay, requite your saucy tongue, by wringing your ears.”

“I hope my gentle master, you are too magnanimous to take a mean advantage, by molesting the ears of a man who has no chance of doing so much for you. I pray you mercy, I meant not to move your choler by hinting that your ears are elsewhere bestowed, but only to say that I, by reason of my weakness, can in no wise contend against you.”

“Then be civil, or at least be silent.” said Clifford, and passed on.

“Craving your good worship’s further grace, I cannot be silent, but desire to be most abundantly civil, inasmuch as I would obtain a favour.”

“I have no favour to bestow.”

“It is not for myself that I would solicit, but there is one for whom you,

before your mishap, Master Clifford, had no small regard, who was like myself, a customer at Canterbury, when you kept the ale-booth."

Clifford looked disdainfully on the jester. The flippant manner, in which he was reminded of his late occupation, induced suspicion that derision was intended, but the plaintive tone of the speaker, intimated what was very remote from a disposition to frolic, and he inclined to believe that Bray had really something serious to impart.

"So please you, I speak of young Master Edmund who is now hard by."

"Edmund! Is Edmund here? No disporting, varlet, or the bones in your rogue's carcass shall not escape so well as they did on a former occasion, when you dared —

"I cry you mercy, but I meant not to flout, till you went the wrong way with me for what I designed should be perfectly harmless. But for Edmund,

he is now in yonder tent, and much I fear, it will go hardly with him."

"What does he there?"

"He has been detained since yesterday seven-night, and they will neither let him go free, nor remain unmolested. They demand that he shall join with them, as I guess you have done."

"And have they striven much to prevail with him?"

"Most powerfully. And right good was the eloquence employed, for I heard part of it. 'The King,' said they, 'is a tyrant, whose sway may not be borne, seeing he has taken away the right of sanctuary.' Now Master Clifford, when you consider how hard this is on robbers and murderers in a Christian land, seeing, unlike other bodies of men, they are not used to come forward to claim their rights, you, no doubt must feel that the worthy host of which you are a most worthy member do well to bestir themselves in such a cause; for it cannot be

doubted, that the particular right in question is one by which no small number of them may profit."

Clifford listened no further, but passed hastily into the tent, forced his way through those who were nearest the entrance, and approached Edmund. Aske was sitting in a chair of state, and haughtily endeavouring to prove the righteousness of the cause in which the rebels were embarked. Lord Darcy, and the Archbishop of York, who had joined the pilgrims, stood near him. The Earl of Poverty, who had now got a dirty ruff round his neck, still wearing his old habiliments, leaned against the chair, his ragged bonnet clasped in one hand, the arm, belonging to which, was placed a-kimbo, while his long thin legs were displayed to the greatest advantage, by the left spindle being thrown across its neighbour to complete the easy elegance of the attitude which he had been pleased to adopt. Aske, whose ideas of dignity corres-

ponded well with the imposing appearance of his friend, the Earl of Poverty, endeavoured to be most impressive on this occasion.

“Many’s the time and often, that you have had an opportunity of declaring yourself, being minded to do so, the friend of liberty and true religion. But still unmoved, you hearken not to the kind words of counsel, which I have addressed to your ear.”

“The fellow is *contemptuous*,” cried the Earl of Poverty. “He heeds not our rank and importance.”

“I have not wished to give you displeasure,” said Edmund.

“By the coals that roasted St. Lawrence you had better not, for if I but utter one word you may never speak again.”

“Here your power is not questioned, but with all disposition to abstain from giving offence, I must say I do not see that such manifold ills result from deny-

ing those who have violated the law, the right of sanctuary, which ought to arm the subject against his monarch.”

“ And mean you also to say that we have no worthy cause for rising, when the King most impiously and unnaturally refuses to acknowledge as legitimate the Lady Mary? Shall the hope of the nation — that lovely and sweetest dispositioned princess, whose piety and moreover whose gentleness surpasseth that of all the world beside, be kept for ever distant from the throne?”

“ In this methinks the king should have a voice, and the people are not largely interested in the decision he may come to now, seeing that a right royal and most princely imp may yet be born, who shall of right stand in succession before the Lady Mary.

“ Nay if the monstrous injustice of the king in this move you not, it is hard to say what will! Peradventure you will laud his sacrilegious and rapacious

doings in despoiling monasteries and convents."

"I deplore some of the acts which he has ordered or permitted, but well I know that the dissolute conduct of the inmates of divers of them might justify a measure of some harshness."

"So has it been said by glozing visitors, who sought in vain to win bribes for their fair report, from the holy men they communed with. But this is all egregiously false. You pretend to believe it, and think the King has acted most unmercifully, forgetful how by him the shrines of the saints have been pillaged, and that he has even but lately burned the sacred remains of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

"I defend not acts like these."

"But feeling as an Englishman should feel, why pant you not to revenge them?"

"Good Captain spare your anger," cried Clifford, "and let me have speech with your prisoner. I shall tell him per-

haps what will stir his heart more than even the destruction of the venerated relics which you have mentioned."

The astonishment of Edmund was great to find Clifford among the motley group by which he was surrounded. The latter proceeded —

"That which has moved me to join heart and hand with those who are now entering on *The Pilgrimage of Grace* will, or I much mistake, produce a like effect on you. Know you that Lord Erpingham has been added to the other victims of tyranny?"

"I know that he has been charged with treason ; but I also know that he cannot fail to clear himself."

"I sorrow for the shock which I must inflict : — already hath Lord Erpingham been executed."

"Impossible !"

"Trust me, I speak the truth. I doubted his condemnation, till strong

proofs were given. The tidings of his death followed speedily upon it; and he has shared the fate of his friend, Sir Thomas More. This has thrown me into the ranks of the pilgrims: for when there can be no security for virtue like his, the claim to allegiance I hold to be forfeited."

Edmund turned pale, and sickening with horror, exclaimed —

"He is — he must be — the King must be the monster that he has been named. You rightly judged that this would decide me. Clifford, call me thy comrade."

No time was lost in tendering the oath.

"You are sworn," said Aske, the moment the ceremony had concluded: "see that you keep well your oath."

A scornful laugh played on his features while he spoke, and he added —

"Whether Lord Erpingham be dead or not, you are bound to the *pilgrimage*."

“ And, moreover,” added his friend, “ you have now the honour to be companion in arms to the Earl of Poverty, and the most magnanimous Captain Cobler.”

Edmund was then permitted to retire. Sad misgivings came over him when he recalled the last words of Aske. Clifford having ascertained the condemnation of his uncle, was easily induced to credit the assertion that he had been executed : but certain intelligence soon reached them that the Peer had been pardoned by the capricious Henry ; and the tale of his death was thus proved to be wholly a fabrication, to shake that loyalty which other means had assailed in vain.

The reflections were sad which grew on the discovery of this treacherous and fraudulent conduct ; but the friends thus unfortunately re-united had little time to indulge them ; for the Duke of Norfolk, at the head of a powerful army,

now approached. Retreat was impracticable, and it was decided to risk their all on the chance of a battle. Fain would Clifford have removed Elinor from the vicinity of the field. The jester offered to conduct her to some less exposed situation, but indifferent to danger herself, she awaited, with trembling anxiety, the result of the contest for him in whom her all of hope was bound up, careless of her own existence, if her lord should fall.

CHAP. XI.

She's sad as one used to it, and she seems
Rather to welcome the end of misery
Than shun it.

WEBSTER.

PREPARING for the battle, Clifford sought no sleep on the night preceding the morning on which it was expected to be given. Elinor assisted him; she sighed as he attired himself for the field; and, this task performed, her grief could not be restrained.

“Forgive me, Clifford,” she said —
“but my heart is sad. I cannot look upon you thus prepared without regarding you as one doomed to perish in this unhappy struggle; and see, with all your proud and gallant bearing, not the warrior who advances to triumph and

glory, but the victim bound for the sacrifice."

"This is weakness Elinor, war is a dreadful game, but all who play it are not losers. The hope which befriended you under other circumstances, ought to sustain you now."

"Heretofore, Clifford, I hoped that evils already felt might be removed, but now I tremble for the accumulated ruin which hangs over our heads, and which you are resolute to meet when it might as I think be avoided. War is indeed a dreadful game, but rebellion is one still more odious and desperate."

"I am sad to lift my sword against my countrymen, and Heaven knows how sincerely I should rejoice if I might be spared the necessity of shedding a brother's blood."

"The thought is appalling, for with it comes the miserable reflection, that death in such a cause saves not from

obloquy, but on the contrary affixes an indelible stain."

"I must not think of that, all who struggle against tyranny must incur a similar risk; if their daring prove successful they live in story as heroes, if unfortunate, they perish as traitors, and till the cause in which they fell prevails, shame is considered their portion."

He was yet speaking when Edmund entered, attired like himself.

"Well, brother traitor," Clifford exclaimed, "for traitors we must be called if we sustain defeat, what is the news of the morning?"

"None of vast importance has reached me. A deluge of rain has fallen, and the river is unusually swollen, but the whole camp is in motion, and we are now looked for."

"Then let us forth."

"Clifford, Clifford," exclaimed Elinor, "this is sad parting!"

“ The soldier must not think when he is expected to fight. True, I may fall, and my son may be called the offspring of Clifford the traitor; but I may, and something whispers that I shall, return in safety.”

“ Were it an honest cause I would be more patient and resigned.”

“ Madam,” said Edmund, “ it is now too late for us to review the cause in which we are engaged. True it is we have been duped by fraud and falsehood, and placed in situations which otherwise would never have been ours; but now we cannot fly without incurring the guilt of perjury, and exposing ourselves to the charge of cowardice.”

“ You would not counsel this, Elinor, you would not have me act a recreant part?” said Clifford.

“ By my love, no. Dear as your life is to me, I would not see you survive your honour, content, if the sad alternative must be proffered, to be the brave

man's widow, rather than the coward's wife."

"There spoke thy heart. By heaven thy returning courage gives me new strength. Now do I feel invincible. Come to the field."

"To the pond, I suppose you mean," cried Nick Bray, who then entered, "for the field, as you call it, is all under water. Sit down gentles and make matters pleasant, you will not be wanted, for to day none but geese can fight."

"Spare your ribaldry, jester," said Clifford, "if your errand have any meaning, let us speedily know what it is, in as few words as may be."

"Allow me to take off my tippet first, for you see what a sopping I have got in coming here with the good news."

"What good news?"

"Why, that there will be no fighting to-day."

"This cannot be true; even now all

is preparation, and the clamour which prevails is not for nothing."

"To be sure not, this racket is about the flood; all were as mute as mice, expecting the battle, but when, from the river overflowing its banks, it was quite clear that there would be no coming to blows to-day, then we all got bravely noisy, and talked of what we would have done if we had but got to the enemy. I have been dealing out heroics for the last half hour to the great benefit of my reputation as I trust, for I look from the brave things I have said to day, to escape having my courage put to the proof for weeks to come."

"But the bustle which is now heard seems not that of exultation."

"Nor is it now, for the flood continues to increase so fast, that they begin to get frightened. To see the poor animals of all sorts and sizes that form this rabblement, which some call a rebel army, urging their shoeless trotters and shirtless

backs this way and that, images to me the loading of Noah's ark, though, as the patriarch had the selection of his companions, I should guess he got more tolerably looking cattle to accompany him, than our brave comrades."

Clifford and Edmund proposed to go forth, to ascertain if indeed the waters were so out that the battle could not take place.

"By the mass you may spare yourselves the trouble," cried the jester, "and remain dry while you can. The falling torrents have damped the courage of those who never had courage to damp till the fight was off, and the rascals are now afraid of drowning, who, if justice be done to their worthlessness, may certainly look for a different sort of death."

Elinor raised her eyes to heaven in grateful acknowledgement of the interposition of Providence, such she considered it, and blessed the deluge which had at least deferred the shedding of blood,

On visiting the intended scene of conflict, Clifford and Edmund found that the jester had not exaggerated. The Don had overflowed its banks, and expanding itself over the plain, its regular limits were lost in the vast sheet of water now presented to the eye.

Many days passed before the flood had sufficiently subsided, to make it possible to resume military operations. In the meantime, the rebel forces, being but scantily provided, began rapidly to diminish. To Clifford it appeared that it would be policy to court a battle, as victory might relieve them from all their difficulties, while defeat could but overwhelm with that ruin, which already seemed about to crush them, without striking a blow.

But the views of Aske, and of those who took the lead in the affairs of the insurgents, were very different. They saw the danger arising from the defection of such numbers of their followers ; but

were of opinion that in the present state of things more might be gained by negotiation than by fighting. A treaty had, therefore, been proposed, and the conferences connected with it were artfully spun out by the Duke of Norfolk, who commanded the royal army, under pretence of sending to London for instructions, as different matters were brought into debate, but in reality for the purpose of starving the malcontents, and thinning their ranks by desertion, so that at last they should be incapable of resistance. In this he succeeded. Aske found it necessary to abate of his insolence, and to bound his claims to demands falling very short of those which had been originally put forth, and boldly insisted upon.

Edmund and Clifford had begun to suspect some sinister design, when one day Nick Bray burst hastily upon them, and, with a most significant look, claimed their attention.

"Lend me your ears, gentles, I crave

your grace, Master Clifford, I meant no reflection on misfortune; so lend me your ear Master Edmund, and you not having such a thing handy, Master Clifford, accommodate me with your hearing while I unfold what it much imports you to know."

"If you have aught to tell," said Clifford, "proceed without farther preface."

"That will I do with all speed. Passing by the side of the river, I just now encountered Father Egbert."

"Indeed!"

"Being not a little frightened, I prepared to run away, but it was too late, for, though the mob handled him very roughly, they unluckily left him his eyes."

"And spoke you to him?"

"I could do no less by an old acquaintance; and, instead of complaint or reproach, he gave me a very gracious reception; for, as good luck would have it, he had not missed me, when he was

found himself where he had no business to be. He supposed that I, like him, had come to Yorkshire but to join the rebels. I did not undeceive him ; but lamented the desertion of the pilgrims, and he condoled with me on it, but added to comfort me, that it would not end so fatally as I might suppose, for a treaty was just on the point of being signed, which would secure pardon to all, but a very few, who were to be given up to the Duke by their comrades."

"Is it so?"

"Be assured I speak truth."

"Know you the exceptions which are to be made?"

"I am sorry to say I have not learned the whole of them, so I just stepped here to mention, that you and Master Edmund furnish two of the names. This he told me with great exultation. So, while you think of that, if you hold it needful, I will go and ask about the rest, only I would not have you remain here to

to await the answer I have to bring back."

"This result," said Clifford, "is what we had a right to expect, after the fraud which betrayed us into the ranks of the rebel crew. Doomed to destruction, it is all in vain to strive with fate."

"Say not so," cried Elinor, "but fly with all expedition."

"But the means? Though thou wouldst endure much, and dare all, thy speed will not suffice to enable us to escape the peril. While flying with thee and thy little one, it shall be impossible to elude observation."

"Then away without me: it is not my life they seek. Nay, pause not to reply, or I shall die with terror. I and my child can follow when opportunity offers for assuring me of thy safety."

"This counsel is wisely, bravely given," said Edmund; "attend to it straight."

"There is no time for pause," the jester remarked; "you must forthwith

make good your retreat, or expect a royal escort to London."

"Away — away !" cried Elinor, impatiently. "Haste to mingle with the retiring fugitives, to the end that you may avoid the snare prepared for you."

"O Elinor ! can I leave thee thus ?"

"Nay, do not delay, or you kill me by remaining here."

"All the fiends of darkness seem to have conspired to accumulate disgrace on this devoted head. My own misconduct gained me the name of profligate ; the baseness of another threw on me the shame of perjury ; recent fraud has placed me in the ranks of treason, — and now, Elinor, can you desire me to merit the reproach of deserting my wife and child in the moment of danger ?"

"To remain with them can avail nothing."

"But it were more manly to die in their defence, than to seek safety in ignominious flight."

"Frenzy is not manliness. I selfishly require you to fly now, when you cannot protect me, that you may live to be my protector at a future day. Hark! I hear approaching footsteps."

"You had better run, my masters," said Bray: "in any case I must, till I get fairly away from you; or else I am afraid a member of my family, for whom I have a very great regard, will be lifted for an hour or so a little nearer heaven than he could wish to be in his present unprepared state."

"If you make your election to remain," said Edmund, addressing himself to Clifford, "I shall do the same."

"Gentles," vociferated Bray, "only reflect what a thing it is to have one's goodly form swung by means of a twist of hemp round the neck. Prove that you have heads by using your feet, and taking to your heels. Never stand looking at one another, but do as I do. Follow a fool's example, and be wise."

With these words he made his exit. Clifford still lingered ; but at length the impassioned entreaties of Elinor prevailed. She named to him a friend of her father's who resided in York, to whom she advised him to repair ; there she was confident he might be concealed, and thither in a few days she proposed to follow him. Mingling tears, and exchanging embraces, they separated.

The house which had been assigned to Clifford, while his accession to the rebel cause was deemed of importance, stood in a garden at the extremity of the town. Scarcely had he quitted it with Edmund, when Elinor heard a low murmur without. She looked from the window, and perceived that the building was beset by armed men ; and the same instant the door of the apartment in which she had been left was rudely burst open, and six or eight of the insurgents presented the points of their halberts to cut off all escape.

"Seize them alive," exclaimed Father Egbert, who now pressed forward far enough to look into the room, not forgetting to take excellent care to keep within the points of the halberts. He started with rage and amazement at perceiving that those he sought were not there.

"Where is Clifford and his companion?" he demanded.

"I know not," Elinor replied.

"Can it be possible that they have already fled? Fly — pursue them in all directions. Use all dispatch in this matter; and remember, if they escape, some of you must hang for them."

The man who had attended him obeyed the command, and promptly retired.

"This way they ran," cried a voice without, which both Egbert and Elinor knew to be that of the jester. "Run fast, you varlets; but mind, they are fearfully armed; so stick close to your halberts, or

you shall never be able to deal with them."

While Egbert was fiercely giving his orders, the wife of Clifford had fallen on her knees before him to implore mercy ; she was still in a supplicating posture, when she heard the jester co-operating, as she supposed, with those who sought her husband's life.

" They shall soon be taken, holy father," he now called out to Egbert, as he entered ; " I saw them run towards the windmill : the wretches, — not to stay and be hanged for the good of their friends."

Thus speaking, his eye glanced on Elinor, who was still on the ground, and he instantly stepped forward to raise her ; he was indignantly repelled, with the exclamation, " Avaunt, traitor !"

" I — I," stammered the jester ; " if I — if I am a traitor, its no more than people may say of your husband."

" Peace," cried Egbert ; " pass you

below, and see the prisoners safely bestowed."

The jester retired.

"Rise, fair one," said the Abbot, addressing himself to Elinor; "eyes like thine should not waste their brightness in vain tears."

"Ah! let them not be vain — if you are a man, pity the anguish of a wretched wife."

"I do pity you."

"May I then hope," she eagerly enquired, "that you will allow pity to show itself in action?"

"Never doubt it. But hark! — the party sent in pursuit of the fugitives are here: I must see the captives secured, and will then return."

"Go not for such a purpose. Ah! let the destined victims pass free. Spare the unhappy Clifford!"

"At this moment I must look to them; but you, if you are wise, will be comforted; for if you desire it, I will yet

provide for his escape. I shall speedily revisit you, and then Clifford shall be free, if you continue anxious for his enlargement."

"For this bounty," cried Elinor, in a transport of joy, "accept my blessing and my thanks."

CHAP. XII.

No pardon can be granted, he must die;
 Must, or I hazard all; which yet I'd do,
 To be obliged in one request by you:
 And, maugre all the dangers I foresee,
 Be mine this night, I'll set your husband free.

POMFRET.

ELINOR knew not to whom she had spoken. Though she more than once had met Egbert at Lord Erpingham's, as he was generally closetted with the peer, she had seen him but for a moment, as he passed to or from his Lordship's apartment. The long period which had elapsed since, had so far effaced his image from her memory, that, changed as his appearance was by the dress which he wore among the pilgrims, she suspected not, that when she invoked a blessing on him, she did so for the bitterest foe of her husband.

Heedless of her own safety, she thought not of escape ; but when, as the ecclesiastic retired, she heard the key turn in the door, and found herself locked up, a suspicion came over her, which she could not wholly subdue, though she endeavoured to persuade herself that there were no grounds for alarm.

Two hours were spent in anxious expectation. Elinor wept over her child, which, unconscious of the misery around it, slept on his parent's bosom. The hopes and fears, by which her breast had recently been torn, passed in melancholy review before her " mind's eye ;" and, still musing on the sad retrospective, she heard not the opening of the door of the apartment, nor perceived that any one approached, till the jester stood near her. The indignation called forth by his late conduct was renewed by the manner of his unexpected appearance, and Elinor scornfully turned from him,

without deigning to bestow a single word on the traitor, as she had not scrupled to call him, when they last met.

"I am sent here to tell you, and I am sorry for it, a story so sad, that Will Somers himself, though surrounded as usual by a crowd determined to laugh, could not make it pleasant."

Elinor listened, but spoke not.

"In short, I am ordered to tell you, I need not say by whom; that to save your husband's life is impossible."

Elinor trembled, and in silence appealed to Heaven for mercy and support.

"This I have been told to say; but lady, I would fain whisper one word in your ear."

"Approach not, thou wretched betrayer."

"Be calm, and hear me."

"I have heard thee too much: it was thy accursed voice that directed the bloodhounds to the right track. But for

thee, my brave Clifford might have escaped."

"What a grievous thing it is, that a woman will have all the talk to herself, and have it all her own way! But, mistress, if you would hear me—"

"My ear should be again abused. Depart, I know thee not."

"Marry, then you might be a little more civil to a stranger. — What I was going to say was this, if you would throw a little kindness into that face, still beautiful, and give some small encouragement —"

"Base hind, be dumb!"

"One of us ought to be so. — Ha! 'tis now too late for explanation, and you must learn from another what I would fain have unfolded.

Some one was heard to ascend the stairs, and Egbert entered. Addressing himself to Bray, he said, —

"Have you communicated the heavy tidings with which I sent you forward?"

The jester answered in the affirmative.

"Then you may away," cried Egbert. Bray lingered for some moments; but, again ordered to retire, he obeyed.

"Lady," said Egbert, "it is sad to be the bearer of evil news, or the voucher for its truth; but mine is the mournful task of confirming the intelligence which the fellow I sent to prepare you for my coming has imparted. Your husband, being excepted by name from the general pardon which has been granted, must be given up to the soldiers of the King, and mercy is not in their thoughts."

"This do I know right well; but when I saw you before, I was encouraged to hope that his fate was not yet sealed. You spoke of enabling him to escape."

"But difficulties, not then foreseen, stand in the way. To make the attempt might cost me my liberty — perhaps my life."

"Alas!"

“Nay, the escape of Lord Erpingham’s nephew might cause the pardon to be revoked, and hundreds would die through his being permitted to live.”

“That — that,” faltered Elinor, “must, be a vain fear. The King cannot be the monster you suppose.”

“It is too probable, that his boundless ire would grasp with eagerness the mighty means of vengeance in his power.”

Elinor wrung her hands with bitterness of heart, and looking to the small couch on which her infant reposed, she exclaimed, while a new flood of sorrow burst from her eyes, —

“My child ! thou art fatherless.”

“But fair one, say,” Egbert resumed, “if, reckless of danger, one daring heart were found devoted enough to encounter the peril of incurring the hatred of his companions, and the wrath of his king, what return would he merit?”

“Oh, all that gratitude could yield

on earth, and all that earnest prayer could win in heaven !”

“ The first shall suffice.”

“ What mean you, sir !”

“ That which gratitude may yield on earth : this is all that he claims, who has saved your husband.”

“ Who — who has done this ? — where is the man ?”

“ He stands before you.”

“ I know not what I hear. Gracious Heaven, if this be a dream, never let me wake more !”

“ Through my means,” said Egbert, “ your husband pursues his flight in safety.”

“ And flies he now towards York ?”

“ Ha ! — Towards York ! — O yes, he goes where he originally intended to proceed : I — I,” said Egbert with emphasis, “ pitying your woe, took care to let him have a fair opportunity for flight.”

“ How shall I acknowledge this kindness ? — how, how can I repay it !”

“ The way is brief and simple : while

he flies from you, thoughtful only for himself, let me be requited by your remaining with me."

If, from some tremendous shock of nature, the earth had opened beneath her feet, and presented an abyss into which she must descend still living, Elinor would have felt but slight emotion, compared with the horrible alarm, which now, chasing joy and thankfulness, deprived her of the power of answering, and almost bereft her of sense and life in the same moment, when, taking her by the hand, her pretended friend presented himself on his knees.

"You seem amazed," he said; "nor can I feel astonished at it: "you could little expect that *I* would save Clifford from an ignominious death, and you from the disgrace which his execution could not fail to bring on you, knowing, as you must, the hatred which he bore to me."

Elinor heard his words, but comprehended not their meaning. He went on:

"Still your wonder subsides not. You

have promised gratitude; now let your promise be fulfilled. From another, Clifford had vainly sought that grace he owes to Egbert."

Elinor faintly repeated the name, in the consternation and surprise which she sustained from this new shock. Rendered motionless by the excess of her wonder, till now she had not perceived that he retained her hand; but in the moment that the name of Egbert burst on her ear, she indignantly released herself from his grasp, and the power of utterance, which had been withdrawn from her by the first disclosure of the miscreant's object, was restored.

"Thou recreant fiend!" she exclaimed: "thy baseness made me at first start. I judged that I saw before me the great enemy of mankind; but thy detested name explains and unriddles all; and now I trace thy lineaments, I am somewhat restored, to find that I speak but with a mortal wretch."

"Is this the gratitude so liberally promised, but now, to him who saved your husband?"

"I owe no gratitude to him who would save his life to blast his honour."

"He would not be so scrupulous, where life was at stake."

"Not even knowledge of thine own baseness can make thee, even *thee*, believe the calumny. He would not live with shame."

"The absence of his ears give proof of that," Egbert sarcastically replied.

"No, monster! I repeat it, — he would not live with shame; but shame can only arise from consciousness of guilt. My husband never would grovel through a life of ignominy; though, in the hope of just vengeance, a hope I trust in God not vainly cherished, he could survive calamity. But his wretched destroyer is already known, and detected crime has made his name the subject of just execration."

“Beware, — in time beware, I say. You shall repent this fury.”

“Never!”

“This instant shall you bitterly repent it,” he replied, in a tone of raging menace.

“Would'st thou fright me by sword or dagger? — Bring forth thy weapon: I defy thee.”

“Your courage soon will cool: my rising wrath shall teach humility.”

“Thy wrath and thee I laugh to scorn. I stand not on the privilege of my sex; for that I know, though all sufficient with the good and brave, can avail nothing with thee; but, woman as I am, I fear not. By Heaven, I feel my indignation give such strength that I could play the Amazon, — beat thee to the earth, and tear thy guilty heart from its polluted home.”

“Enough; — I have proved thy gratitude: now let me whisper to thy pru-

dence, that the danger is not past. Thy folly has revealed the place to which Clifford would repair. Remember this, and prepare to deck thy countenance, with all its softest, most atoning smiles, to give me pleasure."

"None but the smile of measureless contempt can fall on thee."

"Have you reflected, that this perverseness must cost your husband his life?"

"What would thy baseness wring from a torn heart?"

"You know the alternative which I have named."

"Is there no other?"

"None."

"To God, then, I commend my Clifford's spirit."

"And doom his body to the scaffold?"

"If he may only be saved by my degradation — yes. Since such the hard decree, he must submit."

"He will not thank you for this mark

of love. To die is pain ; but tenfold anguish will oppress the heart of the unhappy Clifford in his last moments, to know that his doom was pronounced by the wife of his bosom."

"Inhuman! — You muster all that is most appalling in terrible array against a lonely trembling wife, and seek to crush virtue beneath the horrid weight of terror and despair. But you will not succeed : no, Clifford will never reproach me with his death, because I am faithful to my duty. I but make the election which he would dictate, could he hear the infamous proposition."

"Indeed! — methinks you would do well to afford him an opportunity of speaking for himself : at least you might pause till his voice can be heard."

"It needs not, monster! — for I know his heart, and all the thoughts and feelings which inhabit it, and have no cause to hesitate, were he here even, while his tongue could fashion them into words."

“ Then let the consequences of your decision fall on him. When too late, he will repent that he was not permitted to choose for himself.”

“ And who would dare to tender him the choice?—Thou would'st not like the task: for, even in the dungeon's gloom, thy timid wickedness would shrink from naming it to him, rightly judging, that in the moment which saw thy errand performed, the very chain which bound his gallant limbs would strike the insulter dead.”

“ Since you are thus resolved,” Egbert furiously replied, “ I will reason no more. But while I hasten to give Clifford his death, you, handed over to the lawless hands of the incensed rabble from whom he has fled, shall find, too late, that there is a degradation surpassing that at which your senseless pride revolts.”

Obedient, as Elinor could not but conclude, to some unseen signal, the

door was abruptly forced, and those who had presented themselves at an earlier hour again appeared. She believed the moment arrived for the execution of the persecutor's terrible threat. Egbert stood by the couch, on which the child, awakened by the noise, still reclined: his ferocious glance seemed to select it as the first object of vengeance; a halbert was pointed in that direction. The frantic mother threw herself before the weapon's point, to shield the infant, and clasping it to her bosom, she sunk fainting on the floor.

CHAP. XIII.

—————For him,
Life's cup, embittered to the brim,
Stood drugged with sorrows.

GRATTAN.

THE narrative must now go back to circumstances, which, from the period at which they occurred, ought perhaps to have been earlier noticed. It was in the Tower of London that Lord Erpingham had the first opportunity of embracing his daughter, after a melancholy separation which had continued through many years. The meeting was one which called forth emotions very opposite in their nature. They exulted in the discovery which had brought them together; but in proportion as their joy was great for this, their afflic-

tion was extreme at the prospect they had before them of a new, a speedy, an eternal separation.

At almost any former period, Lord Erpingham could have welcomed death with more satisfaction. The love of life had been rekindled by the recognition of his children, but he disdained to pray for its extension, on conditions which were at variance with his honour and his conscience. He was urged by many of his friends to acknowledge the justice of his sentence, as that, they contended, was the surest way of moving the King to mercy ; but this he steadfastly refused to do. To make such acknowledgment would be to confess guilt, and since of this his heart was wholly unconscious, he could not consent to an unmanly sacrifice of truth. Of the two evils, to him it seemed the lesser to prepare for the block.

Firm to this resolution, when Sir Geoffrey Brandon, who had lately gained

some favour with the King, waited on him to endeavour to induce the required submission, the Peer replied : —

“ I have been guilty of no disloyalty, but adhering to the religion of my ancestors, the head of their church is the head of mine. If His Highness, who once so gloriously achieved the high title of *Fidei Defensoris*, has discovered that he was in error, he does right to act on his altered opinion; but I, not having been so fortunate, if I err, cannot regulate my thoughts, in matters of religion, by the understanding of another.”

“ But your newly-found children,” Sir Geoffrey answered ; “ think of them, and reflect how seriously their interests must be affected, by your suffering the punishment of death for treason.”

“ That thought affects me, but I am much consoled, by the reflection that I have never merited such an end. Since I cannot choose but suffer death undeservedly, or to do that to save life, which

in my judgment would deserve death, I ought not and will not pause on the course to be pursued."

This determination was considered fatal to his life, but when his answer was borne to the King, Henry admired the constancy of his prisoner as much as he condemned his obstinacy ; and, in a fit of generosity, the pardon of Lord Erpingham received the royal signature.

Joy not to be described prevailed through the metropolis, when this act of lenity was known. Ferdinand and Mariana believed their troubles were finally terminated; and Lord Erpingham, though not often very sanguine, was much inclined to adopt the same opinion.

" At length," said he, " I think I have reached that haven in which I may safely cast anchor, and remain, through the few remaining days which Providence may lend me, undisturbed by the storms which agitate the rest of the world."

" Blessed beyond measure, blessed

shall we be," cried Ferdinand, "after the fearful tempests we have known, seeing we are at length permitted to enjoy the blissful calm which now awaits us. Mariana, no longer dismayed by the dread of a convent's gloom, shall henceforth dwell in safety beneath an indulgent father's roof, seeing she is released from her vows by the disgrace and dissolution of the sisterhood which claimed them."

"I know not," said Lord Erpingham, "that I could consent to her shaking off the restraint to which she had submitted herself, though this is sanctioned by the powers that be; but that I cannot view those vows as binding, which were dictated by the profane depravity with which Mariana was lately associated. However it is not under my roof that Mariana shall long reside."

"At least," said Mariana with a smile, "I may venture to hope my father will not send me from him in anger."

“No, of that be assured; but that sweetly mantling blush which now invades your countenance, tells me that to be sent where I would send, will not cause you deep affliction. It is to Edmund, — to him who now anxiously seeks you, — that you shall be given.”

Mariana was embarrassed for an answer; virgin modesty prevented her from replying in her usual tone, but the sacred love of truth forbade her to disguise her sentiments by affecting indifference or displeasure which she could not feel.

She was released by the sudden entrance of Sir Geoffrey Brandon, whose joyful countenance announced that he had good news to communicate, before it was possible for his tongue to utter that which gave him pleasure.

“Trust me,” cried Lord Erpingham, “I am cheered to see you thus merry, Sir Geoffrey. It would little surprise me to learn that you had some gladdening intelligence of your son-in-law and

your fair daughter, now so happily my niece, as was originally intended, ere we had knowledge of those troubles which were to disturb us in our latter years."

"It is not that, my Lord, which has planted smiles on my cheek, though I hope aided by your Lordship, it shall not be long ere we discover them, and bring them merrily back to England; but that which I have now to tell is, that the King has been pleased to speak most kindly of you."

"Indeed!"

"And, not satisfied with the grace he has already shewn, he declared to me that he would henceforth be evermore your singular good Lord, and even now would fain have speech of you at Whitehall."

"This pleases me much, and I shall obey the welcome summons straight."

"His Highness, being apprized of your recent happening on your children,

would also fain have them conducted to his presence."

It was with indescribable satisfaction that Lord Erpingham repaired to Whitehall, in consequence of this intimation. His Majesty, on the arrival of the peer, was in the grounds belonging to the palace, amusing himself with shooting at a mark. The moment it was made known to him that Lord Erpingham attended his pleasure, he being then in the act of taking aim, suddenly disengaged his arrow, gave it, with the weapon from which it was to have sped, to his yeoman of the bows, and, with a smiling countenance, turned to meet the nobleman so lately the object of unjust resentment and capricious mercy.

But at this instant he was met, with an air of anxiety and surprise, by a nobleman, who, presenting the King with a dispatch already open, besought him to bestow his immediate attention on certain sentences, which he indicated with

his finger. The King read the passages to which his attention was directed ; his lips quivered, his face turned pale, and, a moment afterwards, a flush of rage overspread his cheek, and no vestige of the urbanity which had lately dwelt there could be traced.

“ So, my Lord,” said he, as he entered the apartment in which Lord Erpingham, by his command had waited his coming, “ you scruple not, even now, to appear before your King.”

“ I, my liege, never scruple to yield prompt obedience to the lawful commands of my King.”

“ This sounds well, my Lord ; but methinks, after pardon so recently bestowed on you in your own person, you might have trembled to appear before me, at the moment when you were right well aware that others, led to it by you, are now engaged in new treasons against me.”

“ I pray your Majesty, let him who has reported this be confronted with me, that I may denounce the falsehood, as that which has nothing of truth in it ought to be denounced, even to his face.”

“ Silence, knave ; nor think to practise cozening arts on me, pretending that you wot not your nephew, with him whom you have ever reared as your own, the sparksome Master Edmund Sherborne, have joined the rebels.”

“ Dread Sir, speaking under your correction, this may not be. My nephew, degraded and punished for that which now appears to have been no sin against truth, is at this present (so I have worthy cause to believe), no longer in England ; and, for Edmund — ”

“ Yea, is it so, my Lord ? but look to it well. You may shortly have good proof that he is in England — aye, by my holy dame, and in London too ; for

when taken, hither shall he be brought straight, to depart no more."

Surprised at the anger of the King, and still more at the intelligence thus communicated, Lord Erpingham felt a degree of embarrassment to which he was little accustomed. He, however, attempted to repel the charge preferred, and said, —

"I have ever wished, in so far as my feeble capacity enabled me, to act the part of a good and dutiful subject to your Highness. Those who regulate their conduct by my precepts will never be found to rebel against your rightful authority. Even my newly-found son has already been instructed by me, that he who fears God will not fail to honour the King, and to be prepared, should need be, to fight — nay, to die — in his good cause."

"These fair sayings are all answered in brief. Thy nephew, — thy nephew, I

say, — and he who has ever been educated as though he were thy son, — where are they ?”

“ I know not, my liege ; but I still crave leave to hope that they are not to be found in the ranks of your Grace’s enemies, or rebellious subjects.”

“ Fool ! — knave !” (The King, when angry, was not choice in his expressions.)

“ What meanest thou ? Be not these letters from the North, and mention they not that the rebels increase in insolence, being countenanced, as all surmise, by the newly-liberated Lord Erpingham, whose nephew is already one of their leaders ?”

“ Of this I have not heard before.”

“ ’Tis false, beast ! traitor !”

“ It is known full well to your Highness,” Lord Erpingham replied with firmness, “ that I am nor beast, nor traitor ; and nothing have I said that is false.”

“Darest thou prate to me? Knowest thou not I can soon stop that tongue?”

“Your Grace may crush me to the earth—may deprive your unworthy subject of life; but not even regal authority can despoil me of mine honour, or bend my mind to affect content when wrong is done me, and receive shame as my due.”

“Why now I see rebellious rage flashing in thine eye! I looked not to repent thus early that my mercy had interposed between the axe’s edge and thy life; but beware, my Lord.”

“I shall, my liege, I shall beware how I sin against my lawful sovereign. His mistaken ire may endanger my life, but my honour and my conscience are in my own keeping, and not to avert the wrath which may doom me to the scaffold would I forget the one, or act against the other.”

“Stand not there thus saucily to hold parley with your King. Be wary in your

conduct, Lord Erpingham; your nephew is with the Yorkshire rebels. Remember that well, and when he comes, as perchance he quickly may, to stand in the self-same situation from which my weak pity but now snatched you; he may look for a different result, for now I swear by my Maker, and may the oath be registered in Heaven! should conviction and condemnation fall out to be his lot, from me he shall find no mercy. If his blood stream not on a scaffold, it shall not be through my interposing love for the name of Erpingham."

The King then retired, with the utmost indignation indicated in his countenance and manner. Lord Erpingham, equally surprised and afflicted at what he had heard, would fain have persuaded himself that the report was untrue, but other advices soon terminated all doubt on the subject, and satisfied him that Clifford was really with the insurgents, and that Edmund had embarked in the

same cause. It would be wasting space to tell how deeply Ferdinand and Marianna were afflicted by this news. The evil unhappily was one which admitted not of remedy or mitigation, and nothing remained but to await in awful expectation the event.

CHAP. XIV.

I do in friendship counsel you
 To leave this place, albeit you have deserved
 High commendation, true applause, and love.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Elinor revived, the persons whose sudden appearance had overwhelmed her with alarm, were no longer in the room. She perceived that her head was sustained by some one who was occupied in bathing her temples ; and the idea that it was Father Egbert who attended her suggesting itself, she started up with horror, and beheld Nicholas Bray.

Though her fear abated when she had ascertained that Egbert was not there, it was small consolation to find herself still under the observation of the jester, whom she believed the creature of her more terrible enemy.

She erred not a little in the conclusion which she had drawn from the expressions used by Bray. His directions to the pursuers were given not merely to throw off suspicion from himself, but to favour the escape of the fugitives, by sending those who sought to overtake them where they were not to be found. Though subsequently prevented by the impetuosity of Elinor from explaining his purpose, he continued to watch near her with anxious care, and to labour for her preservation. He overheard the language held by Egbert, and took care to call others to the spot, to whom he represented that they were all betrayed by the very man who had been one of the principal instigators of the rebellion, and that to obtain Clifford's wife he had not scrupled to favour the flight of two of the individuals, who were to be given up to buy pardon for the pilgrims generally.

And it was in that moment, when

Egbert, falsely pretending that he desired to save Clifford, claimed on that ground the favourable regards of Elinor, that Aske, through the efforts of Bray, was made one of the listeners. He was not slow in deciding what ought to be done, and in a few minutes the chamber was forced in the manner before described, and Egbert himself made a prisoner.

Bray was highly rejoiced when he saw Elinor again unclose her eyes.

"Never be afraid, young lady," said he, "all may yet be well."

Elinor made no reply, but her looks sufficiently intimated the disgust with which she regarded the jester.

"Now I see," said he, "you are still angry with me. You give me just the same frown which I got at Canterbury: then I might deserve it, but trust me I do not now."

"Leave me, leave me," said Elinor; "I have no thought, no speech for a wretch of thy calling."

“Marry, at present I am a wretch of no calling,” the jester replied; “but I would in all cases be your very poor friend.”

“Talk not of friendship, man.”

“Though your words be few, lady, your tone is not a little severe. But at that I need not marvel, for you suppose me to have endeavoured to detain Clifford. This is not so, but all the contrary; and now hoping that he is in safety, I would fain offer my poor services to conduct you to him.”

“What new cruelty would you devise?”

“None, lady; and up to this hour believe me I have practised none; unless, indeed, it be against Father Egbert, who, through my doings, is at this present in straight confinement.”

“Cease thy glozing. I know thy levity, in other days, could make sport of things little fitted for jest, and question not, that now thou art but preparing to mock distress.”

“ I may not deny, that my irreverent mirth has sometimes run riot at that from which it ought to have fled. But, lady, there is at least one object in creation, which not even the mad wit of a fool could profane with derision — a weeping woman.”

Elinor looked on the jester with some surprise. The tone of animated benevolence in which he spoke, was so unlike his usual rambling strain, that it commanded attention, and she doubted whether she had not wronged him.

“ Thy manner is different from what it was wont to be,” she said; “ what may I think of thee ?”

“ At least think that I can feel for a woman in distress, and for a wife and mother, bereft by calamity of the protector to whom I would fain restore them.”

“ Is this the language of sincerity ?”

“ Doubt it not. Let the absence of your enemy, removed by my means, and now exposed to that very peril to which

he sought to give Clifford, pass for one voucher. That your husband has not yet been made prisoner may serve for another, as it will show you, that seeming to direct the pursuit, I taught his enemies to do any thing but follow him."

"I fear me I have wronged thee, jester."

"Now you glad my heart. Let us hasten from this dismal neighbourhood. I will be your guide to York. Since it is thus, I shall be so joyous, that my song and jest shall enliven all the way."

"These shall not be needed."

"But they cannot be restrained; come, we will laugh, and we will be happy. By the way, I hope Master Clifford will not be jealous."

"Jealous, friend! Of what?"

"O, if you cannot tell of what, I say no more. But methinks your query is something like a personal reflection: I only meant to hint my desire, that he might not take it amiss that you journey

with me, and amuse himself by cropping my listeners, that I may not always have the same advantage over him that I have now."

"Have done with this idling."

"I cannot stop my tongue while I am so happy as to possess your confidence. Come, I will lift your baby. Why, look at the little rogue, he laughs at me, while a tear, produced by your late alarm, rests just below his eye. How motionless it stands! Sorrow and care have as yet produced no furrow by which it may pass, and so there it lingers on his damask cheek unable to get away."

"Now let us forward."

"I am ready to attend you," cried Bray.

"Come, my young sir, you must with me. See how he keeps laughing. Marry, he makes me vain, for methinks I must even yet be worth something as a fool, since I can make this youngster so merry. Why, what do you give me that buffet

for, you saucy young dog, with your little fat paw? If you go on boxing my ears at this rate, you will serve me for a flapper. But come, lady, forgive my prating, and now let us take the road to York."

They quitted the house together, and left Doncaster without molestation or enquiry. Elinor followed the jester, who continued talking incessantly to the child, encouraging his playfulness and pretending to reprove it.

Two hours had elapsed after their departure, when they started at hearing the trampling of horses behind them. Bray suggested the propriety of concealment, and a small mound enabled them to escape notice.

"Verily," cried one of the passing horsemen, "it is no wise thing to send us forth to night on this chace, which, after all, may end in nothing."

"If," said his companion, "the tale be true, which holy father Colt's Tooth

thought it right to tell, they will have passed Ferry-bridge, ere we can come up with them."

"Be that as it may, beyond Ferry-bridge I will not budge ere morning."

"Nay, nor will I."

"Nor I — nor I," repeated the others of the party, as they rode by at a pace which soon carried them beyond all chance of being overheard by Elinor and the jester.

"Those fellows," cried Bray, "are sent to find Clifford and his companion. They proceed to York."

"I would fain hope not."

"I fear me it is past hope, or even doubt."

"Indeed! how can it be known that they have fled to York, unless indeed — you — unless you —"

"Unless I have told! They are safe from me, lady; but you unluckily named it to Father Egbert."

"Alas! and so I did."

“ It cannot now be helped. But do not seem so sad. Clifford will not be the first man who has suffered for his wife’s tongue. We must do our best to save him, by getting to York before these varlets.”

“ There is little prospect of that. Though I cannot feel weariness in such a cause, yet no speed that it will be possible for me to exert, will enable us to distance their horses.”

“ That is very true ; so as we cannot go faster than they, what we have to do is, to make them slacken their pace.”

“ But it cannot be done.”

“ We shall see that when we get to Ferry-bridge, where we must join company with them ?”

“ How say you, must we join company with them ?”

“ Yea, so please you. I know you like not such mean society, but as you could endure it at Canterbury, I would hope you can submit to it now, for a brief space.”

"At Canterbury, my husband was with me."

"And that your husband may be again with you, which I fear he never will if you indulge over delicate scruples, I pray you to bear with the presence of these fellows for one short hour."

"I consent, but what can that avail?"

"Time will shew. I would further have you stoop to the abasement of becoming Mistress Bray."

"What mean you?"

"Only for a short time. No offence to you, a wife is one of those treasures of which I would never rob a man; but at present if you should be known as the partner of Clifford, it will nothing serve your husband or yourself; therefore I would have you appear as mine. Could I but strike a light, I would paint you."

"And why should I be painted?"

"Not to improve, but to hide beauty. To prevent your being recognised by

any who might know you, and to make you pass for a she jester. You see I have got what remains of my fool wardrobe on. This I wear because in travelling it secures me some favour ; and you as my spouse, shall not be dealt with harshly."

" I know not how to act."

" Never fear. But the moon shines bright, and now I can see to paint you. Oh ! this is a good omen ! I was only wishing for a tinder-box, and kind Luna offers me a ready lighted candle."

Bray lost no time in altering the appearance of Elinor, so that her look was almost as grotesque as he had taken care to make his own.

" And now," said he, " I pray you be prepared to pardon some license of speech, since it is needful that you should pass for the wife of a fool. See, we are already near Ferry-bridge."

" And must we mingle with those who seek my husband's life ?

“ I can devise no means of saving that life without doing so. Come, be of good cheer, and I trust we shall soon resume our journey with lighter hearts and better prospects.”

“ Who goes there ? ” demanded one who stood at the door of an inn, or ale-house, as they entered Ferry-bridge.

“ Who goes there ? ” repeated Bray, mimicking the gruffness of the person who had accosted him ; “ why those who would fain come here ; and since the host cannot have been mad enough to go to bed leaving his door open and you so near it, if you will waddle your limbs to the right or to the left, so that your betters may find passage way, you will see *who goes there*.”

“ You are a pert varlet, and use too many words.”

“ It comes from the foolish benevolence of my nature, which still prompts me to enlighten the ignorant, and waste

wit on those who are too dull to relish it."

" You may spare it here."

" Well, I am sparing it ; for to spare is to dispense it, which I do in the affluence of my humour, still throwing pearls before swine, though acorns might do as well."

" But take heed how you throw your gibing acorns this way, or you may hap to get a taste of an oaken stick for your pains."

" That is good — good for one who is bad. But a jest from your surly mouth contrasts oddly with your bear-like carriage. Still to have produced it is something. A skilful gardener need not blush for producing an autumn sprout from the old stump of a summer cabbage; so now that I have given you your way, do you give me mine, by standing out of it, that I may pass. — Come Bridget."

" Heyday ! what have we here ?" cried

the man, who now perceived the representation of two long ears in the bonnet which the Jester wore.

"A poor fool," cried Bray, "so let us not jostle one another."

"And what would you? Did you think you were coming to the *feast of the Ass*?"

"No, I was afraid I should be too late to sup with you."

"And who is it follows? Have you got a wife?"

"To be sure, most fools have."

"I marvel, seeing those of thy calling are so illy paid, that thou shouldst get a wife."

"It was because I was so illy paid that I married. Alone I could not eat, so I thought it a saving to marry, as twenty can starve on less than one. Come along, Bridget," he continued, addressing himself to Elinor; "we have good fortune on our side, to find a house open for suppering, or rather afternoon-

ing, for I have had nothing since my dinner ; so, come in."

While he spoke, he pushed by the man who had first challenged him, and conducted Elinor into a room where the pilgrims, by whom they had been passed on the road, were regaling.

" Well met, my gallants," cried the jester. " Your worships make merry. None of you shall rise, I insist for me, or for my family ; so, though you may see by my dress that you have got a fool among you, consider me but your equal."

" Why master Jester," cried the man he had encountered at the door, " this is none of your family. That boy in nothing favours thee."

" Beauty, Master Gruffpipe is not hereditary," returned Bray ; " if it be, supposing thy father to have looked like a handsome man, thou hast been shamefully cheated of all thine inheritance."

" Whence come you ?"

" From Lincoln, so please you, which,

you know, is a marvellously fair city ; and I have found rare sport on the road from it."

" What sport, master fool ?"

" You shall know that I fell in with a dame indifferently gay in her apparel, who demanded, just to show off her grand airs and costly notions, if Bridget would sell her a pin to fix a stomacher.

" You mean a skewer."

" I mean not a skewer, nor did she mean a skewer. Let thine ignorance be informed, that Queen Catherine, whose head is now about to be severed as Queen Ann's was formerly, has been used to deck herself with small pins, made of brass and copper, (the invention is new,) in place of skewers,"

" I remember to have heard it."

" So did the dame I mentioned ; and she having made show of her knowledge of court finery, entreated me to inform her of the best, meaning thereby the shortest road, to Lincoln.

“ And where was the sport in all that ? Thou art a dull fool.”

“ If my wit run as low as thy sense, this may be said with truth. A foundation must be laid for a house, and so there must for a story ; — a child must be nursed before it can run alone, and so must a jest. Now listen. The buxom one I saw, being in converse with me, never scrupled to own that she was wife to one who by a late pact was to be given up to the King. His name, she said, was Clifford.”

“ Clifford !” repeated several voices ;
“ which road was she journeying ?”

“ Why, the Lincoln road, as I have already told ; and thereat she laughed, and demanded if we had seen her husband ?”

“ And had you ?”

“ We had, with another whose life, as I since learn, was in the same predicament ; and it seems these had been sent on, while she, pretending to be

frighted and surprised by an amorous old monk, had let out, as if by chance, that they fled to York."

"Was that but a trick?"

"I am now coming to the jest. Oh! if you had but heard her laugh at the hurry in which she had got certain honest doddypates sent off towards York, to arrest those who never thought of going there, you had not soon forgotten it. Then to hear her describe the fume in which the muddy-brained blocks would arrive, and the sheepish looks with which they should return empty handed, you had not shut that yawning gulf, which I suppose you call a mouth, for a week."

"Perchance her mirth will be soon stopped."

"How shall that be, seeing those who go to York cannot catch the runaways who make for Lincoln?"

"But we can pass thither at once, for we are those whom she has deceived."

“ Say you so? O, then I shall claim share of the reward which will be gained when the fugitives be taken. This will be rare, will it not, Bridget? Take ale, wench; drain the cup: for with such a supply in prospect, we need not fear charges.”

The party to whom Bray had addressed himself, now took it into serious consideration, whether they should continue their journey towards York, or take the road which the jester had described the Cliffords to have travelled. They decided for the latter; but doing this, they determined on leaving one of their party behind to watch the motions of the jester, whom they enjoined to wait their return, at the same time threatening vengeance if it should appear that he had deceived them.

Elinor was alarmed at the idea of being detained; but Bray was not at all disconcerted. Pretending to exult in the anticipated capture of Clifford and

Edmund, he pledged the whole party in repeated draughts of ale, taking care to drink but sparingly himself. While they were thus engaged, he suggested to Elinor that she might set forward with the child, and calculate on his overtaking her. She acted on this recommendation without delay. Shortly after day-break those who had been ordered to York, took the road to Lincoln, with the exception of one man, who was left to look after the jester. Bray had managed to ply him well with liquor, and he found little difficulty in prevailing on him to follow the others. He said they could both ride on the same horse, so that the pilgrim must always be secure of his companion.

In this manner they set forward. They had scarcely travelled a mile, when a little brook by the road-side met their view.

"See you not how transparent that stream is?" enquired the jester.

“ I note it,” replied the pilgrim, “ and it makes me thirst.”

“ Down and drink ; I will hold the reins for thee,” cried Bray ; at the same time taking them from the hand of the other, who was almost helpless from intoxication.

“ I would do it, but I cannot get off easily.”

“ Never fear, man. It is not difficult to get down in the world. Withdraw thy foot from the stirrup. So — that is well.”

“ I can do it but slowly.”

“ I’ll aid thee to do it quicker. — There, you are now down,” said Bray, and he precipitated his companion into the water.

“ Hallo !” roared the pilgrim ; “ help ! mean you to drown me ?”

“ O no, quite the contrary,” said the jester, turning the horse round. “ I am going back to the inn to buy a child’s

caul, which the landlord has for sale, to save thee from a watery death."

He clapped spurs to the horse, retraced his steps, and soon rejoined Elinor, whom he lifted with the child into the saddle; and proceeding now with greater expedition than before, they arrived in safety at York.

CHAP. XV.

From one dread moment, shuddering fell
From mental joy's frail eminence,
To that abyss of woe intense.

GRATTAN. .

It was in the street leading to the Minster, called the Stone-gate, that Elinor rejoined her husband and his friend. That joy was felt at their meeting, — that this was speedily succeeded by doubts and anxieties, consultations and debate, — the reader will easily imagine ; and on these it is therefore unnecessary to dilate. To state the result will be sufficient.

It was calculated that the pursuers, baulked in their expectations, would speedily return from Lincoln to seek their original place of destination, and

therefore they concluded that no safety could be hoped for in York. The next thing was to determine to what place they should remove. Edmund inclined to the belief that it might be wise to get to the coast ; but it was finally resolved, that as flight by sea would be one of the first things that would occur to their enemies, it was extremely probable that agents, who could recognize them, had already been dispatched to the nearest sea-ports.

But without coming to a final conclusion, as to what particular place they should seek, they left York singly, in the direction opposite to that in which they calculated their pursuers might be found. For several days they passed from place to place in the same way, avoiding being seen together ; but never being long without communicating with each other. At length, at the suggestion of the jester, they shaped their course to Sutton-in-Ashfield, where, he said, he had a cousin, whose house would be at their command.

Here they found the shelter of which they stood in need ; and from this place Bray undertook to journey to London, in order to communicate with Lord Erpingham.

He succeeded in what he had engaged to perform, reached Fickett's Fields, and saw the peer. It was his Lordship's opinion, that Clifford and Edmund ought not to remain in any place at which they had arrived at the time when active search was making for them, and he therefore recommended that they should remove to Nottingham. There, at the outskirts of the town, by his means two cottages were procured for their reception, of which they soon proceeded to take possession. They were humble, as it was deemed prudent to avoid every thing that might indicate the possession of more than would suffice to furnish the common necessities of life.

The habitation of Clifford was at the foot, or but a little above the foot of a

chalky hill. A roof had been constructed over a hollow scooped in the hill, which was fronted with chalk, in which a door and casements had been inserted. It was mean in appearance, but as the very humility of its aspect was considered to constitute their security, he and Elinor felt no disposition to repine on that account.

Often did they enjoy a walk by the side of the Trent, shortly after the morning had dawned. They even scrupled not to invade the forest, though at the risk of being challenged by the *Verderors*, who were strictly charged to restrain persons disposed to leave the highways, from an apprehension that they might intend injury to the game. But the very early hour at which Clifford, his wife, and his friend ventured on these trespasses, exposed them to small chance of being subjected to the penalties, which might have been pronounced against such offenders, by the court of *Swainemote*,

before which, if taken, they must have appeared.

“ Those hands were not made for such offices as they now perform,” Clifford one day remarked, when he saw Elinor engaged in preparing the principal repast of the day.

“ That tongue, Clifford, was not fashioned to utter such solemn and complaining sounds,” she replied. “ While you are safe from persecution, and relieved from the moral degradation, which once pursued your name, I am happy. The winged carolers, our neighbours, are clamorous in their joy for the commodious shelter this hill affords them, and so could I be, when you forget to grieve. I enjoy, with highest relish, the very peculiarities of my situation, which you regard as painful ; and if I can but administer to the comfort of my mate, I would scarcely deign to exchange this our nest for a palace.”

Months rolled over, and observation

was successfully eluded. Edmund resided in a cottage near that of Clifford, and Bray acted as servant for both. Sometimes they left their homes early in the morning, and passed the day in the romantic and retired scenes in that vicinity till after nightfall, when the friends repaired to each other's abode, and spent their evenings together.

Both Edmund and Clifford felt often tempted to pass beyond the seas. This done, they might enjoy a degree of security which was not theirs at present; and Edmund was not without hopes that Mariana would rejoin him in another country, and become indissolubly his. But to this plan Lord Erpingham opposed himself, and, cherishing the expectation that the King would one day relent, he in the most pressing terms conjured them not to risk their own lives, and his peace, by making any such movement at present.

To them it appeared far from probable,

that the King would ever pardon. Since their abode at Nottingham, a new insurrection had broken out, in which some of the parties who had formerly called themselves Pilgrims were concerned. These, when taken, had been prosecuted with the utmost severity ; and Aske, who had been received into favour at court, had, with several others, suffered death. Lord Erpingham, however, did not despair, and confident in the precautions which he had taken for communicating with those for whom he was so largely interested, as well as in the trustiness of his messenger, he never ceased to press upon them the importance of remaining some time longer at Nottingham.

Yielding to these suggestions, they gave up the idea of leaving England. Amply provided with the means of procuring every comfort, in which, circumstanced as they were, they judged it safe to indulge, they began to multiply the expedients for making time pass unper-

ceived; and the apprehensions which formerly were never absent from their minds, wore off by degrees, till they almost wholly forgot their recent alarms.

One evening, a man who was coming towards Nottingham from York, was stopped by plunderers. Having taken, as they believed, all that he possessed of value, they were leaving him, when the man thus despoiled entreated that a pair of velvet shoes, of which he was the bearer, might be returned to him. This was refused : he saw them departing, and, anxious to make one more effort, he offered to give them three angels, which they had overlooked, for that pair of shoes. The strangeness of this request surprised the robbers, and seizing the man, they soon obtained the money which had before escaped their search. They now paid particular attention to the shoes, but could perceive nothing so costly in their make as would account for the enormous price the man

had been willing to pay for their ransom. Struck with the mysterious character of the incident, they judged that there must be something extraordinary connected with the shoes, and it was suggested by one, that probably articles of value were sewed up in them. On this presumption they cut the shoes to pieces, and between the soles of one of them found a letter from Lord Erpingham to his nephew. The fellow who discovered it was able to read ; he perceived that the paper which had fallen into his hands enabled him to serve the state and himself at the same time, by giving up Edmund and Clifford, and taking the reward which had been offered for their apprehension.

Edmund was on that night at Clifford's cottage ; the friends were conversing, when the well-known rap of Nick Bray was heard, and immediately after, the jester entered.

“ Joy, joy ! ” he cried. “ We shall now

be happy and merry the longest day we have to live."

"What has chanced?" demanded Clifford.

"What has chanced! — why, good fortune, so long a stranger to you and yours, has chanced; and Lord Erpingham sends word that you have nothing to do but to beg the King's forgiveness, and be restored to your friends."

"Can this be so?"

"Oh, you may be assured that it is true; one came to the door of the cottage, where I was keeping the fire company, and entreated to have speech of Master Edmund. 'Marry, for what?' said I; so then he up and told me. 'Tarry a season,' said I: 'you catch not an old bird with chaff; whereupon he made me know that he had brought letters from Lord Erpingham. 'Is it even so?' quoth I; 'and how doth he send them?' 'O,' replied he, 'in the old way, which is

now no longer a secret.' 'And what may be that same old way?' questioned I. Then he replied, 'That it was by hiding them between the two soles of a shoe, of which he sent a pair;' whereby I knew that he could be no cheat, and so have brought him hither."

While the jester was speaking, a stranger entered.

"What has been told is the truth," he said. "You have but to ask forgiveness, and the past is forgotten. The mayor is now in waiting to receive your submission, and to administer anew the oath of allegiance, and you shall thenceforth be freed from all peril."

"And must he to the mayor?" demanded Elinor, startled at the sound.

"That is needful," the stranger replied, "as you will find it set forth in the letter sent by Lord Erpingham, which, doubtless, you have by this received in the manner he was wont to correspond

with you, while yet there was danger of discovery."

"I have received no letter," said Clifford.

"Then the fellow has loitered."

"He is here!" exclaimed Clifford, and at that moment the messenger made his appearance.

The person who had accompanied Bray looked round, and the messenger, on seeing him, instantly fled.

"Be not alarmed, man," cried Edmund, "all here are friends."

The messenger did not hear, or hearing did not judge it prudent to return.

"He deems the ancient caution necessary," Clifford remarked; "but come, sir, enough has been said to convince me, and now we are ready to obey the welcome summons."

They left the cottage, but had proceeded but a few steps, when each was attached in the King's name as a traitor. The friends were in no condition to make

resistance. Their hands were quickly secured, and they were forthwith conveyed to the county jail.

The calamity was one which could not be concealed. Elinor was informed of that which she most dreaded to know. Bray was almost frantic, and frequently declared, that he had never sustained such distress since the day when his master the Cardinal had made a present of him to the King, when his woe was so great, that, according to Cavendish, "while on the way to court, he lamented like a tyrant," and being there, was so melancholy, that he was soon dismissed, as wholly unfit to cheer those who had an opportunity of enjoying the pungent humour and brilliant waggeries of Will Somers.

With aching heart, still attended by the jester, Elinor followed her husband and his friend and brother in misfortune, to London. Arrived in the metropolis, though her father and Lord Erpingham united their best efforts in the cause of

the accused, Elinor doubted not that sentence would pass against them. It was not long before her fears were confirmed. Subservient judges and timid juries were not then hard to find; and certainly a case was made out against the prisoners, which might have produced a verdict of guilty in happier times, and such as at that moment left little grounds for supposing that the sentence would not be carried into execution.

Bray felt this, and was sad at heart. His mirth was no more; but he still laboured to sustain the sinking spirits of Elinor.

“Never despair, lady,” said he; “though the day be cloudy, the sun may yet shine; and there is hope for an oyster till the shell be in twain.”

“Alas!” she exclaimed, when he thus attempted to soothe her, “I fear there is no reasonable hope for Clifford.”

“Nay, lady, after what you have already seen, it is not meet that you

should despair. But I have witnessed more, and shall still look for better things, even though the death-day were fixed. Why, it is only some two or three years past, that Sir Edmund Knevet, being sentenced to lose his right hand for striking a blow within the King's house, in the Tennis-court, was brought for execution."

"This cannot affect me."

"Methinks it may. Many high and illustrious characters were assembled on this occasion. First among them stood I, in quality of spectator ; then forth came the chirurgeon, with his instruments ; followed, the *serjeant of the wood-yard*, with a mallet, and the block on which the hand should lie. Who should come next but the King's cook, his white cap on his head, with the knife which was to cut off the hand. The *serjeant of the larder* was with him, to set the knife right on the joint. After this, behold

the *serjeant farrier*, with hot irons, to sear the veins."

"No more of this."

"Nay, hear; for it shall comfort you. The *serjeant of the poultry* appeared, with a live cock, whose head was to be struck off on the aforesaid block. The *yeoman of the chandry* brought sear-cloths; the *yeoman of the scullery* came with fire, to keep the irons hot; the *serjeant of the cellar* attended with ale and wine; and the *yeoman of the ewry* brought basin and towels. All being ready, Sir Edmund took of his ruff, and offered to submit his hand to the knife and the mallet, and laid it on the block, as it might be here. The knife and mallet were taken from off the form, which might stand as it were there; when news came, that forasmuch as he had petitioned to lose his left hand, that with his right he might still serve the King, therefore he should go free. Upon this poor cock-a-doodle crowed; but small cause

had he so to do, for his head was presently chopped, to show how it might have fared with 'Sir Edmund's hand, and, moreover, to furnish a relish with the ale and wine, which were presently, so I said, *made a hand of*, in place of that which the knight should have lost. Now, after this, lady, who shall say that there is no hope for your husband, although he be condemned, as many have been before, and who are now well to live in the land?"

CHAP. XVI.

O yet confirm my heart, ye powers above,
This last tremendous shock of fate to prove.

FALCONER.

Most unremitting were the efforts made in behalf of Clifford and Edmund; but, though sometimes flattered with momentary hope, their friends had little reason to congratulate themselves. The name of Clifford could not be mentioned to the King without calling forth his indignation; and he unceasingly reminded those who were disposed to speak in behalf of Lord Erpingham's nephew, of the oath he had made never again to shew mercy to one of that family.

Considering themselves devoted to death, both prepared to meet the inevitable doom with firmness. Clifford indulged the belief that greater lenity

would be shewn towards Edmund than he could expect for himself, as it had been proved by witnesses on the trial, as well as by the admission which he himself had made, that Edmund did not join the rebels till he had been urged to do so by the example and earnest desire of Clifford. But this hope grew every day more and more faint, till he almost ceased to cherish it at all.

Clifford calculated that the execution would take place in the course of three or four days, when one night he was visited by Sir William Kingston, the Lieutenant of the Tower. It was after ten o'clock, and on that account he apologised as he entered, for breaking upon his prisoner's meditations at so late an hour.

"Heed not that," said Clifford ; "society is solace ; and you need not fear marring my rest, as it cannot much endanger the constitution of a man who has but few days to live."

“ You do well, Master Clifford,” returned the Lieutenant, “ to turn your thoughts that way : in sooth ; to give them such direction was now the object of my coming hither. Life is uncertain ; we know not how soon our breath may be stopped ; and seeing in the course of nature we cannot at the most remain very long, it is right needful that we should evermore hold ourselves ready, as it is my hope you do hold yourself, to depart, even almost at a minute’s warning.”

“ This is sagely urged, and may not be forgotten.”

“ Truly, Sir, it were pity that it should be ; for sad indeed were your case, if, calculating on lengthened life, you should suddenly be astounded, like him of whom we read in the Gospel, by the awful tidings, ‘ This night thy soul shall be demanded of thee.’ ”

“ I am much beholden to your kind intentions ; but tell me quickly, good

Sir William Kingston, whereto this wholesome discourse is designed to lead. Hugely am I mistaken, if it be your wont thus to admonish all prisoners being under sentence of death; but not yet appointed to die."

"Ah me!" replied the Lieutenant, with an air of deep affliction; "sad is the task which I have now to perform. Trust me, my heart is full of bitterness while I announce that mercy on earth is not for you. The King has rejected the suit of those who interceded on your behalf."

"This, Sir, is no more than I expected."

"And, further, Sir, you are to know that — that —"

Here he paused, and much affected, took Clifford by the hand, who encouraged him to proceed —

"I have," said the Lieutenant, "within the last hour, received the warrant for your execution."

“ Indeed !”

“ It is here for your perusal. Behold the fatal *stamp*.”

“ The stamp ! I know not of what you speak.”

“ The King, Sir, by reason that he is much in years, and often, but ill at his ease, cannot now sustain the fatigue of writing as heretofore, wherefore his signature has been engraved, and is now, by means of a stamp, conveyed to such instruments as he would sign. Would to Heaven it had been wanting here !”

“ I thank you, Sir, for this kind feeling towards me. When is the day on which I am to suffer ?”

“ It is even that on the threshold of which we now stand, and which, when little more than another hour has passed, shall be here.”

“ I must die then to-morrow. And by what hour must I depart ?”

“ You may not live beyond nine of the clock.”

“ There is no help, Sir William ! but it comes rather suddenly.”

“ It is even so, but I have lost no time in coming to you, more than I could avoid, but it unfortunately chanced, that not looking for this order so speedily, the draper has not sent the black cloth which was ordered to cover the scaffold. To him was I obliged to send, late as it was, to bid him forward some supply by an early hour in the morning. This, and directing the joiner to call his people together to erect the scaffold, which must be on the hill, caused me to lose some little time in coming, but trust me not much.”

“ No blame, Sir, shall attach to you. But can you procure me a messenger, who shall hie to Lord Erpingham.”

“ That has already been done. He who has been sent to the draper, was charged to go on to Fickett's Fields, to beg of Lord Erpingham that he would straight attend here with those whom he

has under his roof, whom I judged you and your fellow-sufferer might covet to behold once more."

"Then my wife is already informed that I am to die so soon."

"No, I but said that you forthwith desired to speak with her, to the end that you might impart the news more gently."

"This is well; I pray you, Sir, let it not escape you when they arrive. It will somewhat abate the bitterness of our separation. Therefore I entreat you whisper all the truth into the ear of Lord Erpingham, but keep it from the females who shall be with him, if this may be."

"I will sadly but willingly obey, and the more so as the self-same request has but now been made to me from your friend."

"He then is not to be spared?"

"He is not, and besides him the Monk Father Egbert, who was largely concerned in the Pilgrimage, must lay down his life at the same time."

“ Indeed ! There at least justice shall be done.”

“ Hark ! — I hear the trampling of horses. It is Lord Erpingham, and those we expect with him — I will down to receive them.”

Clifford waited with much anxiety for the moment which should admit Elinor. He was embarrassed for an excuse to account for desiring to see her that night, without revealing the news which he had just received. Hesitating as to the course he should adopt, he heard the door unlock, and still undetermined, saw Elinor rush to his arms.

“ I desired much to see you,” said Elinor, “ but wished not to interrupt your repose to night, though I might perchance have ventured if I had had hope of being admitted, for I have grateful tidings to impart. But what have you to tell ? Have you been cheered with a prospect of mercy ?”

“ I am not without hope, that mercy

the most ample and complete that any earthly offender could desire, will yet be extended to me."

"And I," said Elinor, "was promised this afternoon by the Lord Chancellor, that he would use his best offices with the King, and that I should know the result (he trusted that it would be favourable) by to-morrow noon."

"Your active love has done much. But methinks you need take no further trouble on my account, since you cannot obtain answer till to-morrow noon."

"Think you that so long, Clifford?"

"Too long to make it worth while for you to do more."

"You speak of it as if it were a year distant. — Reflect, it is but a few hours that we have to wait."

"True ; it is but a few hours that *you* have to wait."

"And much I fear that you have no chance of gaining release from any other quarter before that hour."

"The King can throw open the doors

of my prison before that time, should he think fit to do so."

"Oh, now I see it. You have received some kind assurance."

"It may be that kindness will soon be shewn to me."

"And shall you leave the Tower to-morrow?"

"Leave the Tower! — I did not say — yes — I expect so."

"This is joy indeed. It was therefore that you sent for me. That generous heart could not repose in solitary happiness."

Clifford had gone beyond what he intended to do. He wished to throw a veil over the horrors which the morning must disclose, but it was not his object to kindle that lively and expectant hope which now throbbed in the bosom and glowed on the countenance of the fond, faithful Elinor. He applied himself to repair this error.

"Beware, Elinor, of indulging a delusive dream, which first presenting

imaginary bliss, may then vanish to wake thee to wretchedness and horror."

"Nay, Clifford, never chide the honest joy which glistens through tears of rapture, when I have the satisfaction to learn that you, who so lately believed mercy from the crown could not be looked for, are now expecting an immediate release."

"But we must be prepared for the worst. We have experienced enough of vicissitude to know that the most tremendous shocks are often preparing when danger seems to retire, and anxiety is no more. Did you bring your child with you?"

"Not at this late hour. I thought you would not desire it. The night air might harm him."

"It might. Yet I could have wished to see him. Did you leave him sleeping?"

"I did."

"I would I had seen him."

“ You shall see him in the morning : I will bring him to you by nine of the clock.”

“ By nine !” Clifford sadly exclaimed.

“ By nine he shall be here : I will come to the minute.”

“ No — no — not then, Elinor ! I shall be busy at that hour. But go to him to night. Kiss him as he sleeps, and say for me, even as the clock strikes One, for I shall then be waking, — ‘ Thy father blesses thee.’ ”

“ This will I do. But shall I bring him to you after nine ? Shall I come at ten o’clock, or shall I defer it till I have been to the Lord Chancellor at twelve ?”

“ You need not come before.”

“ After twelve then I shall bring him.”

“ It boots not, I shall not wish to see him then — *here* I mean.”

“ Before that hour, perhaps, you may be enabled to see him elsewhere.”

“ It may be, Elinor, that I shall be-

hold — But let us not flatter ourselves : I would fain hold myself always ready to die, and be you prepared for whatever may chance.”

“ So you are spared, Clifford, I fear nothing that can arrive. Should you die, methinks my woe will be brief, for I must perish with you.”

“ There do you err. Should I fall beneath the headsman’s stroke, it will then become your duty not to yield to sensibility and sorrow, but rather to put forth the courage and the firmness which marked your conduct in other days. This is that which I would press as of all duties the most imperative, the most sacred. Let not weak regret for me, rob my child of the parent whom tyranny would spare. Let him not go forth alone, to learn from a calumnious world that his father was a traitor; but if I have ever been dear, live to tell him truly my unhappy story, that he may not join the unfeeling throng who pass my grave

with scorn, or point to my parched quarters, with reckless derision."

"But why — why at this hour does your mind revert to such images? — why, when such cheering prospects —"

"Nay, Elinor, I — I speak of what may be. — But I would not longer detain you from repose: go — farewell."

"Farewell," cried Elinor, embracing him — "Farewell — but for only one night."

"Only one night!" Clifford repeated.

Elinor was about to leave the apartment, when he called to her.

"Stay — stay a moment. Elinor, you have been faithful to —"

He faltered. "To the end," he was about to say, but he checked himself.

"What would you say?" Elinor enquired, not a little surprised at his manner.

"But this, that you have been ever constant — ever kind. I have sometimes spoken harshly. Do you forgive me?"

“How unkind to ask it! Do you think I treasure up resentment against my husband? I have seen thee sad, and thy tongue has said what thou wouldst not have had it say. But thy heart has pursued and chastised it for disobedience, and then it has given voice to what I do remember — indulgent tenderness and words of ardent love.”

“Then I am forgiven. — One more embrace, my Elinor. Now to thy boy, and remember what I told thee.”

“And kiss him for his father?”

“And bless him, Elinor. At One, even while the bell strikes, my lips shall breathe the blessing I would have thee utter for me.”

At this moment Lord Erpingham entered. Clifford made a sign for him not to speak. They exchanged a few words in whispers. Elinor, with Mariana, who had just quitted Edmund, remained by the door. Both Lord Erpingham and

Clifford desired that their interview, under such circumstances, should not be protracted, and with brief, but ambiguous expressions of affection and sorrow, they parted.

CHAP. XVII.

Such torments, in the drear abodes of hell,
Where sad despair laments with rueful yell, —
Such torments, agonize the damned breast.

FALCONER.

“THEY have left the fortress,” said the Lieutenant, who presented himself a few minutes after the departure of Lord Erpingham.

“I hope,” said Clifford, “Elinor and Lord Erpingham’s daughter received no intimation of what is to take place.”

“None. As they went forth, the straw which had been brought out in readiness to be carried to the scaffold obstructed the way, and the lady your consort enquired wherefore such a quantity should be there. The fellow who had it in charge was on the point of explaining that it was to be laid over the

sawdust, when I cut all short, by saying we required straw for more purposes than one in the Tower, and so no more was heard."

" You did well."

" A confessor is now in attendance : will you be shrived forthwith ?"

" I would rather be an hour or two alone to compose myself ; but the moment it is light, let the confessor come to me."

The Lieutenant retired, and Clifford gave himself up to solemn meditation. His mind was so occupied that he heeded not how the time sped, till the hour of One sounded in his ear.

" Thy father blesses thee !" he exclaimed. " These words are now murmured by the fond mother over her sleeping charge. Elinor still cherishes delusive hope, nor dreams it is a dying blessing of which she is the bearer. Thy father blesses thee, my child, and reconciled to death for himself, still sheds for thee a

tear, from eyes which weep because they may gaze on thee no more."

He resumed his seat, which he had left as the clock struck, and reclining on his elbow for a few moments, closed his eyes. But the brief repose in which he was inclined to indulge, came not at his call; he found himself incapable of sleep, and abandoning all thought of rest, he occupied himself in writing to Elinor.

The confessor came at the time Clifford had desired to see him, and attending to him, Clifford endeavoured to give all his thoughts to his immortal concerns.

The Tower now presented that scene of silent activity which those who have ever witnessed the preparations for an execution, and who have not witnessed them so often as to become familiar with the spectacle, must own replete with awful interest. The gradual assembling of those who had to take a part in the solemn business of the day; the directions given to individuals to be in readiness at particular

points ; the exhortations to guard against indecorous hurry, and inconvenient pressure ; the brief repelling answers called forth from those who had access to the sufferers, by the enquiries of individuals who had gained admittance but to gratify curiosity ; and the information sparingly dispensed by some of the officers, who were not proof against solicitation, caused a low murmur to run through the fortress, which, though never still, indicated acknowledgment from all present, that silence best befitted the occasion.

It was past seven o'clock when Clifford was led from his apartment to a room in which he was to be joined by his fellow-sufferers ; Edmund had previously been conducted to it. Eager to see each other, and gratified to converse once more, though but for a few moments and under all the appalling circumstances of impending death, they bounded forward, and each clasped to his bosom the form of his friend.

"This scene is near its close," said Edmund; "how does it affect you?"

"Much less than I once expected," Clifford replied; "and I feel as if, others being unthought of, parting with my life would to me be as easy as throwing off my doublet."

"My feelings are similar, for my heart owns no crime. Can our companion feel thus?"

At this moment Father Egbert was brought in. The expression of his countenance did not indicate serenity of mind: a ghastly paleness dwelt on his cheek, and the effort which he made to sustain without emotion the presence of those who owed their ruin to his machinations, adding ferocity to apparent sickness, made him an object which it was impossible to regard but with horror.

His scowl was met by Clifford's disdainful glance.

"Dying," said Clifford, "I could wish to depart in charity with all mankind,

nor wish I to see one fellow-creature involved in my misfortune; but even in this my last hour, I deem it no other than devotion, to recognise the justice of Heaven, in dooming him, who has so long been the enemy of all who were not base as himself, to perish in the toils which he had spread for others."

"Enjoy your triumph still," returned Egbert; "it is my consolation to know that it will not be a long one."

"I triumph not; but the feeling will remain so long as my life."

"Perhaps not; for you will yet find that I shall not be carried to the scaffold on which your degraded necks must bend, or if I am, it will be in a state which shall secure me from the misery of shrinking from the gaze of a gaping rabble, and of pitifully submitting to the headsman's blow."

"This must be said," Edmund answered, "by other tongue than thine, ere it can gain credence."

“Your present boast,” added Clifford, “is not less fraudulent than your former pretended piety. Wake, wretched being! to reason and repentance, and prepare to meet your inevitable fate with decency.

“Fool! I disdain your counsel; and have taken care to baffle all my foes. Faithful to the heart that demanded, and the firm hand which administered it, already the timely-swallowed venom diffuses itself through my veins. Yet a few moments, and you will see me expire by my own act, while you must suffer public execution. Now renew your exultation. — Ha! ha!”

A strained attempt at laughter followed the conclusion of his speech; and his wildly-rolling eye, and convulsed frame, bore ample testimony to the truth of his statement in regard to the poison.

“Miserable man!” cried Edmund; “and hast thou put the seal to thy perdition, by adding to the other crimes which oppressed thy soul, the guilt of suicide?”

“ Dreamer, no. He who only rushes on death, which he knows to be inevitable, preferring a less to a greater torture, works not his own end.”

“ But if, —” said Edmund.

“ Away with foolish suppositions ; if there had been a chance, a prospect of escape, I had not done it.”

The Lieutenant of the Tower entered. “ You,” said he, directing his speech to Clifford, “ must speedily prepare.”

“ I am ready,” was the answer.

“ And I,” said Edmund, without waiting for a similar announcement.

“ For you,” Sir William replied, “ I have far other tidings. Though nothing could induce the king to forego the oath he had made, never to pardon the nephew of Lord Erpingham, late last night he was wrought upon in your favour. The news has been delayed through the messenger being suddenly struck with the palsy, even on his way hither, which took from him, for hours, both speech and

motion ; but he has at length forwarded free pardon for you, and eke for Father Egbert."

" I joy to hear it," cried Clifford. " Fly! — fly to Lord Erpingham, — to Mariana. . One whom thou hadst devoted to death shall live," he exultingly cried, addressing himself to Egbert, — " shall live through many happy years. Now, but that thou art too low to occupy more than a passing thought, I could commend thy guilty policy, which has destroyed that life which mercy — unjust mercy — would have spared."

The moment which disclosed to Egbert that but for that act of which he had so recently boasted, his life would not have been sacrificed, was one of unmingled agony.

" Give me antidotes ! — give me antidotes !" he frantically exclaimed. " But no ; it is all too late. O, cursed poison ! I feel thee stealing over my heart.

Horror! horror! — both soul and body are lost, — lost for ever.

“ Wretched man,” said Clifford, “ solicit for mercy.”

“ Vain counsel,” Egbert replied : “ remorse comes to sting ; but my crime-charged soul cannot tarry for prayer. Mercy! — Ah! — have I dared to utter that word! Some attendant demon whispered it in mockery of Heaven.”

“ Nay; waste not thy last moments thus.”

“ Again you would counsel prayer. — It is too late, when penitence prompts not, but anguish and terror would extort. — The tortures which now rack, but tell of what I must endure through a dreadful eternity. — The sudden news of pardon — O dreadful aggravation of misery! — accelerates the work of destruction. — I must away — down the dark — dark and fathomless abyss. — O horror!”

He sunk to the ground in violent con-

vulsions, evidently expiring. Some of the officers removed him, that his presence might not disturb Clifford, who was now informed, but few minutes remained to him for preparation.

"Trust me," said Edmund, "though life conceded, would, under other circumstances, be regarded as a most royal boon, it now saddens my heart more to leave thee to meet death alone, than it was lately depressed while we expected death together."

"Then you are much unkind: I was guilty of urging those reasons which brought you into this strait; and nothing could administer such comfort to me in my dying hour, as the knowledge that you are saved affords."

"I know these to be your feelings; but this miserable selection makes your fate all the more severe in my mind."

"Not so, Edmund. Much it comforts me, to know that you shall live to soothe the grief of my kind uncle; and yet more

I rejoice, for that you will be permitted to watch over my boy, to admonish him when he shall err, where a mother's voice may fail. Begrudge me not this happiness, but share it with me ; and now away — away to glad the hearts of those, who, mourning your supposed fall, accuse me as the author of your death."

Edmund groaned, but made no reply.

Sir William Kingston announced the sheriffs of London to be in waiting at the verge of "The Tower Liberty," to receive the body of the prisoner.

"Have with you," cried Clifford ; "bear this letter to Elinor," giving his friend a paper. "Trust me, Edmund, I am glad to have none of thy company on this journey."

Edmund hung on him in speechless sorrow, reluctant to loosen his hold, lest he should accelerate by one moment the execution.

"Nay ; I may not be detained," said

Clifford, disengaging himself; then, taking a small red cross in his hand, and placing his bonnet on his head, he hastily, but with a firm step, passed from the room, and took his place in the procession, which had previously been arranged, and which now moved slowly towards the Tower gate. Having reached the limits of the fortress, he was delivered over in form to the sheriffs, who forthwith directed the cavalcade prepared beyond, to move towards the place of execution.

Edmund followed: he marked the calm and unaltered deportment of Clifford, whose appearance was that of one entirely bereft of earthly care. He ascended the scaffold with perfect composure, and was speaking to the ecclesiastic, who attended to assist him in his last moments, when the executioner, falling on his knees, implored forgiveness for the part he had undertaken to perform.

“ I forgive thee, man,” said Clifford ;
“ thou art to me but as the handle of
thine axe ; and so I hold thee guiltless
of my death. There is money for thee
to do thy work bravely ; for resolution in
a headsman is humanity.”

He then, apparently impatient for the
termination of the scene, threw off his
cloak and bonnet. His tippet was next
untied. This part of his dress removed,
Edmund saw his friend kneel. Over-
powered by his feelings, he could look
no more, but hastily forced his way
through the crowd, nor looked behind
him, from dread of seeing the uplifted
axe ; for the breathless silence which pre-
vailed satisfied him that the moment was
arrived in which the devoted Clifford
must submit to the last pang.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope that dare attend.

BURNS.

"SHOULD the efforts now making be crowned with success," said Elinor, as with Mariana, Lord Erpingham, and Ferdinand, she passed from the Tower; "should the king be merciful, with what interest shall we hereafter recal this midnight visit!"

Lord Erpingham made no reply.

"Shall we not, my lord?" said Elinor, appealing to him with some animation.

"We *should* indeed," was his answer.

"What mean those torches which move about in such numbers?" she

enquired, pointing to another part of the hill.

Lord Erpingham was slow to answer, as he knew the lights which had caught her observation were borne by the men assisting those employed in erecting the scaffold on which the prisoners were to suffer in the morning. He evaded explanation, by saying it was not uncommon for workmen to labour through the night in the vicinity of the Tower."

The servants who attended with their horses approached, and without further conversation, he and Ferdinand assisted Mariana and Elinor to mount, and the party proceeded to Lord Erpingham's house. With few words the peer excused himself for retiring at that late hour ; and the ladies and Ferdinand betook themselves to their several apartments.

They reassembled between eight and nine in the morning. The deportment

of Lord Erpingham was calm ; but his countenance was unusually pale.

“ I fear your lordship has rested ill,” said Elinor ; “ you are not well, my lord?”

“ And, my father, you are in tears” Mariana remarked ; “ have evil tidings reached you since we parted ?”

“ No, Mariana, no. — Of that,” he added, speaking to himself, “ I stood in little fear ; for the worst was already known.”

Elinor caught at the last words : though not uttered aloud, she heard them but too distinctly.

“ And what, what !” she eagerly enquired ; “ what my lord was that *worst* ?”

“ Press not for explanation : you will know all too soon.”

“ Know *all* !” exclaimed Elinor ; and the wildness of her alarm communicated itself to Mariana. — “ What dreadful import lurks beneath these ambiguous sentences ? — What is the *worst* ? — What is

the fearful *all* which you would for a moment veil ?”

“ My children,” said Lord Erpingham, “ on me devolves the miserable task of telling that, which had my own selfish feelings been consulted, I should have died before it could be told by mortal. Be firm ; and remember that He who has bountifully given, may wisely, mercifully, take away.”

“ Is it so ? Must we abandon the last hope ?”

“ No lady,” replied the peer, “ we must betake ourselves to the last consolation, and hope that those spirits repose in blessedness, who are denied to remain in this world of sorrow.”

“ Surely, surely, the fatal order has not been signed !” cried Mariana.

“ Prepare to know the truth. Last night the warrant for the execution was received at the Tower : therefore were you sent for ; but it was the wish of the sufferers that you should not be informed

of their doom till some little time had been afforded to prepare you for it, and they desired to spare you the additional bitterness of parting from them, with a knowledge that in this world you could meet no more."

"I'll to the king," said Elinor; "I will find my way to his feet: no guards shall keep me from him; no word of anger, no weapon of death shall repel me!"

"Alas! this cannot be; and if it could, the effort would be affectionately vain. By this the victims have been led to the scaffold."

Not all the endeavours of Lord Erpingham to prepare for this disclosure could prevent the shock from being terrific: Mariana sunk into the arms of Ferdinand, without power to utter one word, and was borne by her brother into the adjoining apartment; Elinor stood motionless as a statue, scarce seeming to respire.

Lord Erpingham took her by the hand, and placed her in a chair.

“ Be calm, madam,” he said, while the violence of his own emotion sufficiently proved, that if he retained the power to give, he wanted ability to follow such advice. After a long pause, he again addressed her :

“ I had hoped to have prepared you for this fatal intelligence by degrees, but my own anguish betrayed me into culpable precipitation. Death, we ought all to hold ourselves ready to meet ; and though a scaffold adds to the terrors which many of the strongest and the wisest feel at its approach, yet it is in some degree consoling to know, that if the crime charged against the victims whose fate we deplore ranks among those of the blackest dye, yet there is in their particular case circumstances which mitigate, and almost excuse the wanderings into which they were betrayed.

"Most true, my lord," Elinor sobbed ;
"but why — why has not this been told
to the king?"

"It has ; but the unhappy oath which
he made, never to pardon one of my
blood, prevented the exercise of his best
prerogative in favour of Clifford. The
whole nation, I have reason to believe, far
from regarding the devoted with horror,
unite their prayers for the departing
spirits, since it is too late to wish for the
remission of the sentence. Even now I
learned, that the moment it is known the
execution has taken place, the bells of
all the neighbouring churches, however
it may offend those in power, will toll for
the sufferers."

"But may there not be a possibility of
moving the king?"

"Were there but the faintest gleam
of hope, think you that I would not
pursue it with eagerness not to be sur-
passed even by your own? But alas! it
cannot be. That oath, that fatal oath,

makes it impossible for the king to relent."

At this moment a shout was heard in the rear of the house, and the word "Pardon!" from a hundred tongues.

"Heard you not that, my lord? It was the cry of 'Pardon!' It grows louder! — it comes this way. — My Clifford is spared."

The cry was repeated.

"The cry is too near, and too loud to be mistaken. *Pardon* is the word. Can this be possible!"

"All is right, my lord — all is well, fair lady," cried Nick Bray, who now burst into the room. "The king has pardoned them. Their noddles may sometimes be laughed at, but they will not be *taken off*."

"Blessings — eternal blessings requite the merciful act!" exclaimed Elinor, while, clasping her child to her heart, tears of rapture fell in swift succession on the traces of that of anguish which had preceded them.

"This is indeed a boon!" cried the peer.

An immense crowd was now assembled in front of the house. Shouts of exultation were repeated. The outer door was opened, and some one approached the apartment in which Elinor rested.

"He comes," she exclaimed; "now—now, my child, receive a father's embrace."

The door opened, and Sir Geoffrey Brandon entered.

"Whither have you been, my father? Why were you not here sooner?"

"I have been striving, though all hopeless the case, to gain an audience of the king to beg a respite."

"But where — where is he?"

"Speak you of Edmund?"

"Aye, where is he? — for doubtless he and Clifford, on receiving their pardons, were liberated in company."

Sir Geoffrey offered no reply.

"I heard him—I heard Clifford enter."

"I think not," said the father.

“ Then fly to meet him. Bid him haste. You look surprised, as though you supposed my senses were bewildered. Know you not, that Clifford and Edmund are spared ? ”

“ I know that Edmund has been pardoned ; but — ”

“ But ! ” exclaimed Elinor, with a dreadful presentiment of what was to follow. “ But what ! ” — Endeavouring to repel the terrible idea which had presented itself to her mind, she added — “ and Clifford too — and Clifford too ; — both have been spared. Thou saidst it, jester.”

“ I did, lady ; and so the mob told me.”

“ Didst thou not see him ? ”

“ I saw Edmund.”

“ He approaches ! ” exclaimed Elinor, as the door again unclosed to admit Ferdinand.

“ Is he come ? ” she demanded,

“ He is ! ” was the reply.

“O joy unutterable! But why — why is he not with you?”

“He feared to approach you at this moment.”

“Feared to approach me! Can Clifford fear to approach his Elinor?”

“Clifford, madam?”

“Aye, Clifford: whence this wonder? Did you not say he was here?”

“I spoke of Edmund. I am indeed unhappy if I so misled you as to wake a hope that Clifford was in this house. I, madam, am but the bearer of this letter, which he confided to his friend.”

“Why did you delay to give it? This will explain his absence.”

With convulsive eagerness she tore off the encompassing silk, and read as follows:

“‘Beloved Elinor! the bitterness of death is past.’”

“Hear the glad tidings!” cried Elinor, looking at her father, and seeming

to reprove the hesitating ambiguity which had alarmed her. — She resumed the reading of the letter, which ran thus :

“ Be firm as you have been faithful ; nor doubt of my last prayer on earth, my first thought in Heaven being yours, and yours alone. Consider me now as addressing you from the world of spirits ; for when this meets your eye I shall be numbered with the dead.”

“ O God !” exclaimed Elinor.

The paper fell from her hand : she fainted not — she uttered no new exclamation ; but inwardly shuddering, she glanced wildly round, and her distracted gaze falling on Ferdinand, she regarded him for some minutes in silence.

“ Whence had you that dreadful paper ?” she at length demanded.

“ From Edmund.”

“ And was there — was there no hope for — for Clifford ?”

“ It is my affliction to tell, there was

none. Edmund left him on the scaffold !”

Elinor sighed deeply. Her feet seemed about to fail her, when assisted by Lord Erpingham, she sunk into a chair.

The tumult in the street continued but with occasional intervals of comparative silence. It was during one of these that the tolling of a distant bell was heard.

Lord Erpingham and Ferdinand exchanged looks, intimating to each other that in the solemn sound each recognised the knell of Clifford. It informed them that the execution had actually taken place.

Elinor had heard the bell, and perceived how it was noticed by those who were near her.

“Receive his soul !” she faintly murmured.

Sir Geoffrey Brandon thought she had addressed some request to him, and tenderly desired to hear it repeated.

"I prayed for my husband," she replied ; "for that dismal note which is now repeated, announces that I am a widow."

The afflicted father turned away to conceal his agitation.

The tolling continued, and the sound came in so many directions, that it seemed clear that Lord Erpingham had not been misinformed when he was told that all the neighbouring parishes were resolute to testify their sorrow for the fall of his kinsmen.

"For thee, — for thee, my child, sighed Elinor, now unhappily an orphan, thy sad remaining parent must still survive."

Mrs. Roper, who had remained near Mariana, came suddenly into the room.

"Prepare — prepare," she cried, addressing Elinor, "for a new shock."

"I know it all," was the answer. "I — I —"

"One is just arrived from the Tower."

"Let him enter. — I am prepared."

“ No, not for such news as I have to impart — you cannot be.”

“ What mean you? Can vengeance pursue the victim even after death! Can cruelty have dared to insult his dear remains!”

“ He lives!”

A cry of universal surprise followed this assertion.

“ He is free!”

“ What can this mean?” demanded Elinor. “ You, madam, would not sport with a wretched mourner’s feelings! I heard the knell of death.”

“ But not for Clifford.”

“ Can the king have relented?” enquired Lord Erpingham: “ has he forgotten his unholy oath?”

“ The King of kings,” Mrs. Roper replied, “ has relented, and removed the tyrannical Henry from earth.”

“ How! is the king dead?”

“ It is for him that the knell is heard which you supposed was sounded for his victim.”

“ And is my husband safe ? ”

“ Even so. Henry breathed his last shortly after stamping the pardon, which was received at the Tower for Edmund and Egbert. The council did not resolve at once to make his death public, but deeming it inauspicious to commence the new reign with an execution, by their advice, the young king’s first act was to spare the life of Clifford.”

Elinor looked on her child, but had no time for speech, when Clifford, followed by Edmund and Mariana, burst into the apartment, and overpowered by the un hoped for joy, the heart which had been firm so long, yielded at last, and she fell speechless and motionless in her husband’s embrace.

When Clifford knelt on the scaffold, it was not to receive the fatal blow, but to repeat the *miserere*. This ended, the ecclesiastic who was present, was uttering the last words of consolation, when the intelligence arrived that the life of Henry the Eighth had closed, and that

the reign of his successor was not to begin in blood.

“Wake — wake,” cried the restored husband, while still bending over the inanimate form of Elinor, “wake, Elinor, to happiness, to witness universal joy, and receive at last the meed of generous heroism and confiding love.”

“The call has not been made in vain,” said Lord Erpingham; “her eyes unclosed, consciousness and recollection return.”

“O yes,” sobbed Elinor, “that voice would almost raise me from my tomb. Marvel not, my Clifford, that I am thus overcome; for, snatched from the appalling abyss in which I lately sighed, to the perception of a feeble mortal, it seems but a brief step from bliss so exquisite as this to Heaven.”

THE END.

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"There are many scenes of high historical interest, and some are given with a laborious accuracy. The ample success obtained by '*The Lollards*' in England makes it unnecessary, perhaps, that we should dwell much longer on its merits. The descriptions of ancient London, and its inhabitants, are ample, curious, and interesting; and it is well that '*The Lollards*' appeared before '*The Fortunes of Nigel*;' for, notwithstanding the difference of period, a charge of imitation would, at least, have been preferred. In justice to the author of '*The Lollards*,' we give the following descriptive extracts, which may be put in advantageous competition with the somewhat coarse, if not exaggerated accounts in *Nigel* of the state of Fleet-street and White-Friars in the days of James the First; and, putting our author in a situation so distinguished, we shall not injure its effect by any further extract or encomium."—*Paris Monthly Review*.

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